A CHILD WENT FORTH

YOI PAWLOWSKA

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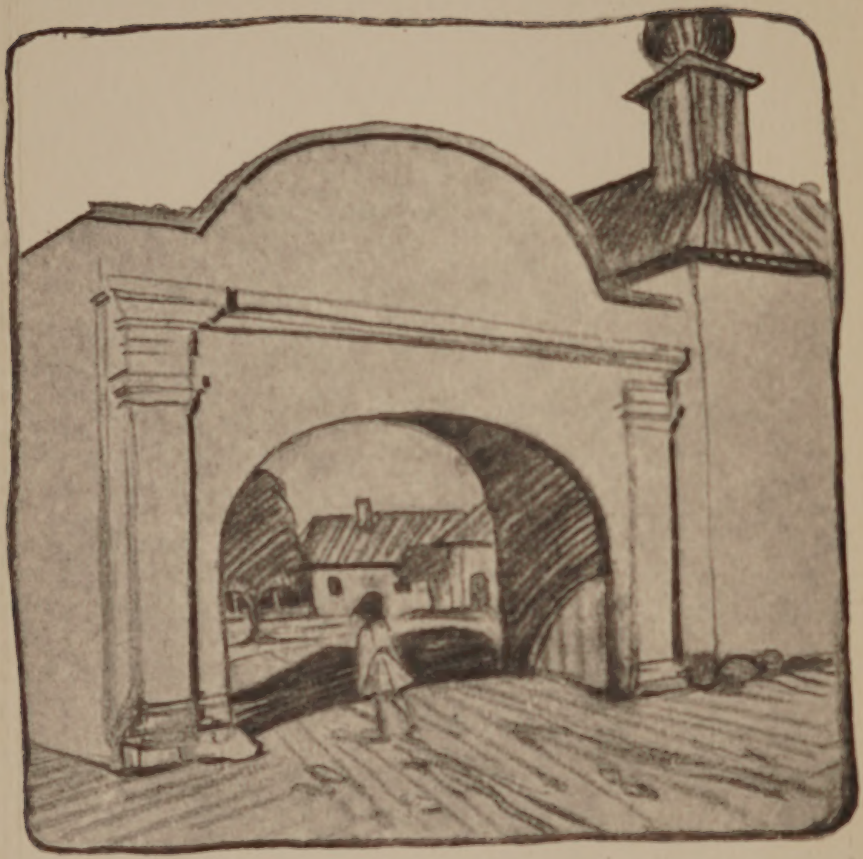

A CHILD WENT FORTH

BY

YOÏ PAWLOWSKA

AUTHOR OF

"A YEAR OF STRANGERS"

"THOSE THAT DREAM"

BOSTON

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN CO.

1914

Printed in England

TO

THERESA BERKELEY

There was a child went forth every day,
And the first object that he looked upon, that object he became,
And that object became part of him for the day or a certain part of the day,
Or for many years or stretching cycles of years.

WALT WHITMAN

A CHILD WENT FORTH

WHEN the hero Arpád stopped at the foot of the Hegyália mountains, he said: "Ma ád Isten szerencset e tájon." Here in this country God gives us happiness to-day.

In a later day three villages were named each after a word of Arpád's exclamation of delight. Mád and Szerencs are villages on the plain, but Tállya is built on a hill-spur that rises above it, and two white churches stand out clear amidst the acacias, poplars and willows that mark this village on the vine-clad hill.

A road leading into Tállya passed under an archway in the middle of a long row of houses. On the outside there were no windows; the walls were plain; it looked as if the village were a walled one and had an entrance gate. These houses had, like many others in the village, low

roofs resting on large round pillars, and thus protected a stone passage on to which the doors and windows opened.

The butcher lived on one side of the gateway and Elizabeth, the midwife, on the other. Her home was a room and a cupboard. The cupboard had a window, her room had only the door for light and air. When Elizabeth was not busy she sat on the grass-covered seat outside her door and talked to the people who were buying from the butcher or to those passing on their way to Szerencs. At Szerencs the trains stopped. It was quite a large place and every one called it the town.

There was nothing to bar the entrance to the village, and often in the cold hours before dawn Elizabeth moved restlessly in her bed, half-waked by shuffling noises and the barking of dogs. She would prepare to get up, saying to herself :

" They have come to call me for Maria, or for the wife of Sándor."

But the noises stopped and she slept again.

It was only gipsies who passed ; they had gone to sleep drunk under the poplar trees by the well in the market-place, and were now returning to their huts.

Elizabeth was old, so old that she had decided not to work any more, but she was awaiting one other birth—one child more born in the village should be her child. The young bride at the big house—one of her babies too—had said to her: "Elizabeth, you must come to me when I need you," and Elizabeth had waited. It was now only a matter of a little time, but there were still some days to wait. She had been sitting as usual outside her door ; a few people had stopped to gossip with her, but now they had returned to their houses. The sun set ; with the darkness a cold wind sprang from the plain and black clouds rolled up from the east. Elizabeth walked under the archway and stood on a little knoll made on the level ground by the entrance to a wine cellar. The plain before her was slowly being blotted out of sight by a storm of hail ;

she could only see dimly, far away, the row of lights that meant the town of Szerencs. She shivered and looked away at the mountains behind her; they still stood clear against the pale green sky of an early autumn evening. With a sigh she went back to her room, and was busy preparing her supper when, with a shrill howl, the wind banged-to her door. Elizabeth, frightened, hastily crossed herself, and, without waiting to drink the hot soup, she hurriedly barred the door and, munching a piece of bread, lay down in her bed and covered her head with a pillow. The hail pattered on the shingles of the roof; she heard it rattling down the chimney and into the stove, and she shut her ears with her hands and soon fell asleep.

There was a continuous banging at the door and a voice called:

"Elizabeth, wake, wake."

Elizabeth moved the pillow away from her face. The wind moaned under the

door; she thanked Heaven for a human voice.

"Wake, Elizabeth, wake, wake."

She crept to the door and slowly opened it. A man stood in front of her holding a lantern in one hand, and with the other one was trying to steady it from the gale. He had come out in a great hurry as he had not even thrown his leather and fur bunda over his shirt, and his white linen trousers were clinging to his high boots.

"Hurry, mother, hurry; my lady has been taken ill suddenly; all the maids are off their heads and you must come at once."

Elizabeth bundled together a few clothes and then wrapped herself in a shawl. She fumbled with the spring of a large umbrella.

"Look here, mother, it's no use trying to hold that up; you yourself will only be able to stand if I hold you."

Elizabeth reluctantly put the umbrella on a shelf above her bed. They went out and she locked the door after her, putting the key into a hole above the lintel of the door.

They started to walk up the wide dark street. The gutter in the middle of the road had become a noisy stream ; they kept as close as possible to the houses and walls to try to get out of the deep mud. The hailstones had not melted, they made the road slippery ; Elizabeth stumbled, the man put his arm more tightly round her.

" I know it's bad, but we must hurry. The master is away ; he thought she'd be safe for another day or two."

They arrived at the gate leading to the house. The gale had swirled a bank of hailstones against it ; they had frozen round the small door in the gate and it had stuck. After a hard kick, it opened and they went in. As they came into the open courtyard the moon suddenly shone clear out of angry clouds. The man turned round with a laugh.

" It looks as if the storm had left some diamond toys for the child."

The pavement of the courtyard was shining with frozen hailstones. A door

stood open, and as they entered a room the man walked to the stove, where he sat down.

" I will wait here all night in case you want me."

Elizabeth walked through more rooms and knocked at a closed door in front of her. It was quickly opened by a young girl, rather fat, and dressed only in her shift. Her coarse skin looked red from the cold; she was shivering.

Elizabeth glanced at her sharply.

" Goodness, Kate, why haven't you got on some clothes ? "

The girl put down the lamp and burst into tears.

" I ran when she called and I have not dared to leave this room since. " There—there," she sobbed, as a long scream came from the next room. " She will die, she will die. There are evil spirits in this storm and I am afraid."

Elizabeth threw off her shawl, gave it to the girl and told her to cover herself. She

then walked into the room from which the sounds had come.

The room was long and dark ; at the end of it on a dais stood a wide bed low to the ground ; deep blue curtains on either side of it reached to the ceiling. On a table stood a lamp ; near the stove on the other side of the bed, and on a chair, were two candles. This made a circle of light in an indefinite gloom, only broken here and there by the pale moonshine coming through the unshuttered windows.

The doctor stood by the bed : when he saw Elizabeth he nodded and said :

" I was awake and saw the lights in these windows, so I walked over at once, feeling sure she needed me."

As he spoke his large and mysterious eyes were like those of a person in a dream. He looked away at the window, against which the wind was blowing the branches of a tree. He was old, his face was white and lined ; his grey hair grew far back on his head ; on his forehead was a small black patch.

He sat down in an arm-chair and rested his arms on it; his hands hung down, and his long fingers, knotted at the joints, were quite still. He did not even move his eyelids, but sat there like some unremembered god in a forgotten land of peace.

The figure on the bed moved convulsively; she threw her arms over her head and cried out in agony. Soon she became delirious.

"Elizabeth, Elizabeth, I see his soul, I see his soul."

"My life, my darling, whose soul do you see?"

"I see his soul, I see his, the doctor's soul. I see it through his eyes. His soul is beautiful, his eyes are Christ's."

Elizabeth held her hand.

"He is a good man, my lamb: if you see his soul the angels are with you."

Anna was born. She lay on the bed still one with her mother. As the doctor parted one from the other, he said softly:

"Child, live of thyself."

And the young mother sighed as she heard his words.

The room was once more silent and dark. Anna slept in her cradle; her mother was awake and moaned, quietly, more as though remembering her pain than as if suffering still. Elizabeth sat by the bed, her face on her hands, as tired people sit who are glad of rest. The doctor went into the next room; he found it filled with servants and neighbours. They had waited to see him before returning to their beds. An old woman spoke to him.

"We have been anxious—she is so young and frail. It has been bad for her—terrible."

The doctor stopped for a moment and looked at her.

"It is always terrible to see the face of death. You who love her should pray for her and thank God that she lives."

THERE was much noise and the sound of horses' hooves stamping on the stones of the courtyard. A dark girl in a black habit sat on a high white horse. She smiled, leant down and put out her arms. Anna was lifted up to her and she held her in her arms whilst she made the horse walk slowly round the yard. Long afterwards Anna realized that this was the first thing that had fixed itself on her memory. This was the first thing that she remembered. The white horse, the smiling eyes, the incredible height and that new and terrifying movement.

Maria, the cook, who, as a rule, took no interest in anything, and was often cross, ran out of the kitchen holding a steaming saucepan. All the maids of the house were there too, laughing and talking.

Anna suddenly felt conscious of a too dangerous nearness to the sky ; she began to

scream, but no one offered to lift her down. The girl on the horse said :

"She must learn to be brave. Let her shriek, it won't hurt her."

Kate, the dairymaid, was passing with a pail of milk which she had to leave in the kitchen. When she heard the child scream she quickly put down the pail, spilling some of the milk in her hurry, and ran up to the horse.

"Please let me take her ; she is so little and she is frightened."

Anna's father, a fair-haired boy of about twenty-four, laughed at Kate.

"You spoil the child, Katinka. We want her to grow up like a boy and not be frightened of anything."

Grumbling as she went, Kate carried the child into the house.

"You are all babies yourselves and not fit to bring up children."

Then even the cook laughed and the girl on the horse said :

"I see Kate still keeps you all in order,

and good thing, too. Now then, hurry up; tell Paul to bring round the horses, and we can all go back to Balog for luncheon."

Anna still clung to Kate's neck, though they were safely indoors. Her own nurse, Irma, was too much interested in watching the people to feel jealous of Kate; she did not even run after her and tear the child from her arms as she had often done before.

Anna, feeling herself at a safe distance, looked out of the window. She liked to watch the restless horses and the dogs running in and out of the open doors; the voices pleased her too; every one was talking loudly and laughing.

The girl on the horse, Elsa Saray, had ridden over to say that she had come for the vintage and was going to stay some months. She and Anna's mother had been friends from childhood, and they were always glad to see each other, though there were many months in which they did not meet, as Elsa spent a great deal of her time at another house—near Lake Balaton—belonging to

her husband. She had brought with her two St. Bernards, a borzoi and two very long, very bright brown dachshunds. Two young men had also come with her; Béla, her young brother-in-law, and an older man, a friend of hers, both riding on black horses. Two servants followed on horseback.

The gates leading to the garden were opened; Paul, the coachman, drove in, on a light victoria to which were harnessed two horses. Anna waved her hands as she saw them, they looked so spirited and strong. Paul sat up very straight on the box, holding the whip; he looked proud in his red-embroidered black jacket, and his hard round black hat had a bunch of fresh-gathered flowers stuck in it at one side.

The door behind Anna opened; her mother came into the room; she had put on a hat and was carrying a cloak. Anna felt that this meant separation—she began to cry. Her mother sat down, took her on to her knee, and tried to soothe her. Anna looked up at a pair of clear grey eyes set in

a small pale face framed by ash-gold hair. Her first consciousness of human loveliness made her forget her troubles; she was outside her own disappointment, looking at something that pleased her. Her mother said:

"You must be a good baby till I come back."

Anna could not answer her, but she did not feel unhappy any longer.

"When they have gone," she thought, "I will shut my eyes and remember her."

Paul cracked his whip, the dogs barked, the young men on the black horses called out to the girls standing at the kitchen door —they promptly ran indoors laughing shrilly —the stable boy shut the gate leading to the road.

The courtyard was quiet again. Anna sat down on the floor to play with her doll.

BY her passionate love for Anna, Kate brushed aside all nursery conventions, and the daily quarrels with Irma would have ended in Kate's defeat and ejection from the nursery but that the young father and mother invariably took her part. Irma, the daughter of a small shopkeeper at Kassa, looked down on Kate; she thought herself a superior being and never demeaned herself by any familiarity with the other servants, though when young men rode into the yard and at the dances at vintage time or on Sundays in the woods, she was quite ready to forget her dignity and join in any fun with the peasant lads. She was persuaded that her mincing, town-bred charms would catch the heart of some rich young farmer, and she went on being optimistic in spite of the fact that no one ever looked at her when Kate, with her angry dark eyes and pouting red lips, was near.

All the men made love to Kate, but not one could get a smile from her. She lived alone in a small cottage. Its roof was thatched, the eaves jutted out some feet beyond the whitewashed walls, and near the ground was a wide, painted band of indigo blue. In the autumn, when the yellow Indian corn was stored in bunches under the eaves, her house looked like a brightly enamelled toy. Her father and mother had also lived there, but they had both died when Kate was only sixteen. She had gone on doing her mother's work, looking after the cows and the dairy. When she was about twenty-three she suddenly disappeared, and though they hunted for her everywhere, not a trace of her could be found—nothing to show where she had gone or what had become of her. Another woman looked after the cows and made the butter. Anna's mother was distracted; she cared for Kate and also felt responsible for her. She joined the search parties that went to look for her and she even sent for men

from Budapest to come and try to find the girl.

One day when she had given up all hope of ever seeing her again she rode out alone into the vineyards. Tired out, she left her horse tied to a stake and clambered over the rough rocks of a sheltered valley where fruit trees grew, and sat down on the grass of a path which divided the vineyards from a valley filled with plum trees. The trees were covered with white blossom : she forgot everything in her delight at the vision below and near her. By her side a small spring bubbled out of the earth and fell into a basin roughly scooped out of the dark rock. The water was a curious milky white, and as the sunlight fell on it through the branches of a fir tree, it shone and glittered like an enormous opal. A voice called her ; she looked up startled, remembering stories of the spirits that haunted those hills. Kate was looking at her from behind the trunk of a tree. She saw that the girl was pale and apparently very ill. She called out to her :

"Don't be frightened, little sister; come here."

Kate's mother had been her foster-mother, and she wanted her to know at once that she remembered the tie between them and was her friend.

Kate crept forward and then fainted at her feet. When she could speak she told her story. She had been afraid—ashamed; she had gone away to hide there, and she pointed to a small house only used at vintage time. There she had lived hidden in a loft with her little child. Roots and trapped birds had been her food, but during the great cold she had got bread from an old gipsy woman to whom she had once shown kindness and whom she could trust. The child was well and strong, Kate said, but she would not say who was his father. Anna's mother had great difficulty to persuade her to go back with her, but at last she made her see that for the child's sake she must do so, as she was not in a fit state to nurse it any longer.

Anna was already walking alone when the child was shown her, and she became so devoted to it that she insisted on going every day to Kate's cottage to see it. She sat down on a low wooden stool by the cradle and rocked it backwards and forwards, watching the little creature crowing with delight. She would put her head close to his and the two made inarticulate little sounds to each other, which each seemed perfectly to understand.

Kate's cottage was the cleanest in the village ; everything not in constant use hung by nails from the rafters. All round the walls were painted earthenware jugs : the bed was in one corner covered with feather-stuffed quilts reaching nearly to the ceiling ; a large white stove took up one wall. Near it was a door and four stone steps going down to the place where the butter was made, though in the winter time Kate often made it sitting on the earth and stone seat outside her door, and held the wooden churn between her knees, as she pulled the stick in

the middle of it up and down. Once a week she made bread, and often Anna sat by her watching the mysterious ways of making an oven ready for the baking. Great branches were put in at the wide iron doors and then lighted, then heavier wood was burnt and more and more put in, till the oven was well heated. After that the red hot cinders were raked out and a dull glow lighted the cavernlike depths. Whilst Kate prepared the oven Anna sat on the little wooden stool, watching each movement with interest and wonder.

As she worked Kate told her stories. Anna always asked for the story of the oven and Jánko the Robber. She came every Wednesday—Kate's baking day—and every Wednesday she asked for the same story, and every Wednesday Kate told it in a different way. As Anna came in Kate ran to put a plank under the child's feet—the earth floor had just been swept and wetted. Anna sat down and began as usual :

"Kate, tell me about Jánko."

Kate's head was tied up in a white handkerchief patterned with red roses: she wore three or four full skirts, very short, just reaching down to her high boots. When the heat of the oven was very great, she put her top petticoat right over her head and face, just as if she were going out in the rain.

Kate began:

"Many, many years ago."

"How many?"

"Over a hundred years ago."

"Kate, do you think there will be a hundred years more?"

"Surely, my lamb, quite a hundred more." Kate felt she had to reassure Anna, but was not at all certain herself.

"And what will happen when there aren't any more years?"

"Then everything will burn and burn and burn. And all the people will burn, and there will be no Tállya, no Hungary, not anything.

Anna was quiet. A horrible thought oppressed her—she might possibly live to be a hundred, live to be burnt. This reminded her of the troubles of Jánko.

"Is Jánko still alive?"

"Of course not, my angel; he lived a hundred years ago."

This was definite. Anna felt relieved; evidently no one could live so long, such an immeasurably long time. Her voice was more cheerful:

"Kate, tell me more about Jánko."

"Well, he lived in the woods and he lived by stealing. He was dark and wicked, not good even to his own people: and every one was frightened of him. He stole, he killed; he stole sheep and pigs, even the pigs that people were fond of and kept always near to their cottages. He stole wine too, and only the best. When he and his companions got into a cellar they would spend half the night drinking, and when they left they took away with them barrels of the most precious wine. The

villagers knew in the morning which cellar had been broken into by finding on the long wooden sticks which are used as candle-holders the burnt-out ends of all the spare candles. When they opened the cellar doors and found these at the top of the steps, they knew what to expect.

"One day when all the men—and most of the women too—were working in the fields, at harvest time, a woman who had just prepared her oven for baking heard a man's voice at her door. She looked out and saw Jánko. He was dressed in his best clothes and had a feather in his hat a yard long.

"'Hullo,' he said, 'I am glad to find you alone, Ilka. Pretty woman like you should always be alone in case a man comes along who needs you. What do you want with a husband who beats you and makes you wait on him? Come with me to the forest and you'll know what freedom is—and love, I'll give you gold and fine clothes, and all I'll ask of you is your red lips and your pretty laugh.'

"Ilka was frightened but she did not show it at all, she said :

"'Of course I'll go with you ; I am tired of slaving for a boor and an ugly one at that. What girl wouldn't be flattered by a man like you ? But first of all let me go into the cellar and fetch you some special wine ; only I know where it is kept, and we can drink it together.'

"Jánko followed her and they walked to the end of the cellar. This took a long time, and Ilka hoped that perhaps in the meanwhile some one would come to her cottage. But when they came back there was no sign of anyone. Her cottage was the last in the village, and between her and her nearest neighbour was a large field of corn. She looked anxiously across it towards the other cottages ; she heard nothing but the swish of the wind in the gold-ripe corn, and saw nothing but the red poppies that grew everywhere. She thought she saw blood and she was afraid.

"Jánko, finding her as gentle and kind in

the sunshine as she had been in the darkness of the cellar, felt quite certain of her, and whilst she put together her clothes he drank more and more tokay. Everything was ready and packed in a large square of pink cotton, when suddenly Ilka started up.

"'Why, I quite forgot I have some loaves baking in the oven. Let's take them with us: it's a long day, I expect, since you have tasted fresh-baked bread.'

"Ilka stood by the oven door and made Jánko put in the shovel to bring out the loaves.

"'But I don't see any bread, and its burning like hell,' grumbled Jánko.

"'You must be blind,' laughed Ilka; 'there they are at the end of the oven.'

"Jánko was, in fact, very short-sighted, but it made him angry to be suspected of any physical defect; he knelt closer to the door, though the heat was stifling him.

"Ilka, who had not yet put the loaves in, gave him a sudden shove: he struggled to get up, cursing her, but he was so muddled

with the wine he had drunk and the heat that Ilka, who was a very strong girl, pushed him right in and barred the door. Then she put her apron over her face and ran screaming into the village."

At this point Anna asked breathlessly :

"Was he burnt to bones?"

"No, to ashes—like flour, only grey."

"And what happened to Ilka?"

"Oh, every one thought her very brave because Jánko had killed so many people, but she became very strange afterwards and drowned herself in the Hernád. She said that after she had shut the oven door she felt that she loved him."

But the end was different every time the story was told.

Anna was no longer the only child in the Old Big House; a little brother had come. When she first saw him lying in the arms of her mother, such a wave of agonizing jealousy swept over her that she could only sob. Her mother tried to comfort her; her father gave

her chocolates ; Irma suggested a new doll as a present, but Anna still sobbed in such a heart-broken way that her mother began to cry too. Kate was sent for. Anna rushed to her.

"I hate him, I hate him."

Kate laughed.

"What, hate that silly little boy ?"

"But Mamma loves him and he is a boy—really a boy, she says, and I want to be a boy too."

Kate patted Anna's sleek little head ; the pale gold thick hair was cut very short.

"Why, my sweet, you are just like a boy ; your hair is like a boy's, and you are brave like one." By this time Anna was a little less violent and listened. "We'll go to the shop of old Isaiah, the Jew," went on Kate, comfortingly, "and get from him that shovel and rake that you wanted for your garden."

Anna smiled again, and from that time she was more than ever with Kate and her baby. Then a strange thing happened. One whole day there was no sign of Kate ; she did not bring the milk in the morning, and she

did not come to the nursery window to say: "My little lamb, my sweet flower, how are you this morning.

In the afternoon, too, Kate did not come. It was a long afternoon, very long and dull. A painful thought came into Anna's mind that there were days in living that were longer than other days and in which something seemed to be missing; you did not want to laugh or play—they were dead days. When Anna went to sleep she dreamt that Kate had fallen into a well, and that she looked over the edge of it and all she could see was a white arm raised as if asking for help.

Next morning, as soon as she was dressed, Anna went out by the garden gate, crossed the road and ran into Kate's cottage. She called; no one said a word: there was a silence as if some one were near but could not speak. It was like a night silence, though the sun was shining. The cradle was not in its usual place. Anna found it hidden between the oven and the wall. There was no baby in it. Frightened, though she did not at all

know why, Anna began to cry, but when she saw that the table in the middle of the room was covered with flowers and sweet-smelling herbs she felt safer. Kate liked flowers, Kate had put those there ; she was only hiding with the baby and would suddenly jump out and say boo, or come forward smiling from behind a door. Anna wanted to smell the flowers ; she pushed a chair towards the table, then climbed on to it and stood up. There, in the midst of the flowers, lay the baby, looking very white, its tiny hands crossed on its breast. Anna threw the flowers aside—some fell on to the ground—and sat down by the child, calling it all the endearing names by which she herself had ever been called.

" Blood of my heart, look up—smile at me ! Sweet life, your hands are cold : let me put them into mine and warm them."

She held a little hand enclosed within her own small hands, put it near her mouth and blew her warm breath on to it.

Kate came in at the door. Anna saw that

her eyes were red—that she was crying still. Everything felt cold round her: a black heart-shadow clouded the sunshine of early morning.

"Kate, what is it, what is it? He won't smile at me."

Kate said nothing, but she knelt down on the floor and buried her face in the flowers on the ground and cried loudly, shaken by her sobs.

Anna had heard of death: she had thought it meant terror, darkness and mystery. Here were flowers and a sleeping child. She clambered down and clung to Kate's arm.

"Will he never, never, never smile again?

Kate shook her head and, seeing that the little girl trembled with fear, she took her into her arms to comfort her.

PAUL came into the kitchen in the early morning to say the kittens had been born in the stables. By midday Anna had heard about them, and followed by Irma—angry and loud of voice—she had rushed out of the nursery as she was eating her luncheon.

"I will not allow you to jump up in the middle of your meals," Irma scolded. "You did it yesterday because you wanted to see if the old gipsy woman was a witch and had brought her broom, and now you run off to see a lot of horrid cats. I can tell you one thing, though ; if you touch a kitten before its eyes are open you will not be able to make bread."

Anna was well in front of Irma, but heard all she had said. She stopped for a second to answer her.

"I don't want to make bread, and I do want to touch the kittens, and I will play with them."

In another moment she was standing by four kittens, who were lying on a small stack of hay in a corner of the stables. She decided not to touch them after all; they looked sleek and not quite pleasant, and perhaps, she felt, it might be a shame for a girl not to be able to make bread. Paul was there and he put the kittens in his apron so that she could see them better.

Irma tugged at her arm.

"Now you must come back, but I am going to tell your father how naughty you are."

"I don't care, I can't help it; you call everything I do—naughty." And Anna began to whistle defiantly.

Irma pulled her along by an arm.

"I suppose you know that whenever a girl whistles Our Lady in Heaven cries."

"Are you sure?"

"Of course I am—doesn't every one say so."

Anna stopped. From that day she could never whistle without a guilty feeling that she was hurting some one—somewhere. Later on she tried to believe that Our Lady

could not possibly cry every time a girl whistled—there are so many girls in the world—but she had believed so implicitly when it was first told her that she could never after be quiet certain that it might not be true.

In the afternoon, on her way into the garden with the baby, Irma left Anna in her father's room. He was writing at a large desk and glanced up as they came in; his blue eyes looked amused.

"Has Anna been naughty again?"

Irma, as usual, had a great deal to complain of; when she had finished she carried the little brother out of the room.

Anna stood by the window: her father went on writing. The silence became oppressive, but how good fresh spring looked outside in the garden, and the sun, and the birds singing; and in a field the black cow was munching grass. Anna stepped softly towards the door; just as she had turned the handle without any noise at all the blue eyes looked up angrily.

"I had not given you permission to go."

"No . . . but . . ."

"Don't speak ; you are always ready with an answer. Come here."

Anna walked to the table. Her father looked at her. She had on a round black fur cap and a short white rabbit-skin coat, and wore high boots. His voice was kinder as he said :

"Anna, it is time you went to school ; you must learn to be like other little girls and not such a tomboy."

"But, father, I don't like lessons."

Her father was very grown up : he said sententiously :

"We all have to do a great many things we do not like." Then he laughed out loud and wondered if every parent felt foolish when he talked platitudes to his child. He lifted Anna on to his knee.

"Tell me what you do like to do."

Anna did not stop one moment to think ; she began :

"I like going with you to fish in the

Hernád. I like it when you catch those big fish and make me lie down on the ground, as you measure how big they are by me. I like hearing the gipsies play ; I would like to hear them every day—every day. I like helping mother in the garden, and I like driving with her. When you read me fairy stories I am happy, and I like being up late and eating the sugar you leave in the coffee cups."

"What a lot of likes ; let's hope you haven't as many dislikes."

"Not dislikes exactly. I hate Irma."

Her father remembered the duties and responsibilities of parents. Anna had been naughty again, she must learn discipline ; she was such an absurd little thing that it was difficult to realise how lawless she was. He broke in :

"You mustn't hate anyone, only what is evil."

"But Irma is evil ; she is—silly."

At that moment the door opened and her mother came in. Anna scrambled down and ran to her.

"Tell me that you won't let me go to school."

Her mother knelt down by her and put her arms round her.

"But you will like it, I know you will. In the play hour you can see many other children. I have now come to fetch you to take you with me to see the schoolmaster. We are going to arrange for you to go there next week."

This was bad news, but still it was not to be till next week, and for Anna the present moment had always its full value. She was not much upset; this moment happened to be a pleasant one—a walk with her mother and perhaps more delights besides.

They went out of the gate together and hand in hand down the street, passing houses hidden, as those in the East, by high walls and trees. Then they came to a street of very small houses all thatched with straw instead of being covered with shingles as the better houses were; they were painted with bright bands of colour and, like all

the other houses, had their gable ends to the street. Each house had a long seat by the gate. Then they came to an open space with a well in the middle of it. Very high poplars grew all round it, and near it a weighted log pointed to the sky—bluer above the sharp green of the trees.

A girl had just put a pitcher on the wooden ledge which surrounded the well; she had started to pull the log down to draw water when they came near to her. It was Rachael, the daughter of old Isaiah the Jew. She was dark, prettier than the other girls in the village and dressed in a different way to them, in better materials. She did not wear the usual high boot, but boots with buttons on them. Her father kept the biggest shop in Tállya, and whenever he went away to buy things for it he brought back something special for Rachel. The last time he had gone she had asked him to bring those boots with him. Every one in the village talked about them when she first wore them, and if Rachel did not

become any more popular because of them she became at least more envied. Though they were quite useless in the mud she wore them every day. Anna's mother stopped for a minute to speak to her, and then they walked on till they came to the house of Elizabeth. Anna knocked at the door; it was ajar and a very feeble voice said: "Come in." Anna followed her mother into the room. Elizabeth was in bed; her eyes lighted up on seeing Anna and she asked her to leave the door open quite wide so that she could see her better. Under her spotlessly white cap her face looked like old parchment. Anna fumbled in her pocket and brought out a half eaten biscuit.

"Eat it, Elizabeth; it's good and I'd like you to have it."

"Elizabeth's too ill to eat hard things," her mother said; "you must bring her soup."

Anna was sad. Elizabeth ill? She certainly looked very white. She was sorry for her, but Elizabeth had promised to take

her to the next fair and her illness must not stop that.

Elizabeth guessed what was in the child's mind.

"I mean to be well enough to take you to the fair. It's not for three weeks yet."

Anna clambered on to the bed, which was built against the wall like a bunk in a ship.

"You dear, dear; I have saved up lots of money and I will buy you a painted gingerbread man. I am going to buy a book for myself."

"A book," laughed her mother; "why, my little one, you can't read a word."

"No, but I want to have a book for my very own, one with a cover all spotted with colours outside, and with lovely letters inside all meaning something."

"You will get a book all about the dear saints"—Elizabeth was tired, her voice was hoarse.

"Oh no, I want to get one of poetry. That doesn't fill all the page and it looks prettier."

"But it won't have pictures of the saints," suggested Elizabeth.

Anna became thoughtful. What Elizabeth said was true; the saints had pictures, but then their words filled all the page. She was undecided which she wanted to have, and sat down on the threshold of the door to think about it.

Her mother asked Elizabeth:

"Now that the days are longer do you not feel less lonely?"

Elizabeth looked out of the open door as she answered.

"I feel much more alone. In the winter evenings neighbours come to see me—the door is shut, the room is warm and they like it; but in the summer they are all busy till they are tired out and go to bed; then I lie here looking at the wide open door, and night stands there silent and dark as if watching me. I cannot believe that beyond that pall of black there are living people, nor that any human being could come to me out of that darkness. I can almost hear

it saying to me: 'Elizabeth, you will walk through a darker door to a darker night than even this'; and when the butcher comes to tell me that it is late and I had better go to sleep, his red round face, set in the blackness of my eternity, makes me laugh. I always expect to see death, old and tired as I am, coming to beckon me."

Anna forgot all about the books, all about school as she listened to Elizabeth. After a little time her mother told her to get up and say good-bye, as Elizabeth was getting tired, and Anna saw that she had sunk further down in the bed and looked lost under the high white quilt.

She stood by the bedside and, with her eyes full of anxiety, looked at the shrivelled figure of Elizabeth.

"Elizabeth, do not sleep any more with the door open; something may, after all, come out of the night to take you away."

Elizabeth held Anna's two little hands in her own. Tears stood in her eyes; one drop fell on to the back of Anna's hand.

Anna quickly drew it away and wiped it ; though she knew she was doing a rude thing, she felt that she must do so.

Elizabeth still held the other hand and looked at her.

" And if something does come and take me away, you will remember me, won't you ? "

Anna thought for a second.

" If I remember you, Elizabeth, will what I remember of you always be here, not gone away with what I don't remember of you ? "

"Yes, my sweet, in your little heart something of me will live."

Anna's mother went out of the room very quickly, and when Anna ran after her she did not seem to wish to speak.

The road before them was bordered with acacia trees all in bloom ; they looked as if they were weighted down by a heavy fall of snow ; their scent was delicious. Anna ran in front of her mother, picking up handfuls of dust-covered fallen buds and smelling them. At the last tree, just before the road

went down into a small valley, she turned round and watched her mother coming towards her. A dreadful thought came into her mind: her mother was not like the mothers of the other children—she was dressed daintily, her hat was pretty too—she looked like a young girl. The mothers of the other children were all women of the village—they were not lovely, nor did they wear pretty hats, only handkerchiefs tied on to their heads. Surely her mother ought to have sent her with Kate. She walked on thoughtfully till they came to the iron gate and the steps that led up to the school garden. There were trees and bushes in the garden, but no flowers. In one part was a square of much worn grass in the shadow of large trees, and there the children did their lessons in the great summer heat. The school-house was a small, low building; it had a door in the middle and a window on either side higher up than the door. It was one of those houses which look like faces when children draw them in a book. Two

chimneys at each end were the long ears listening to the chirping of many little birds.

Anna knocked at the door—the schoolmaster opened it and they walked in. The first thing Anna noticed was a vat of water behind the door; a drinking mug was tied to it with a string. She immediately wanted to drink—her mother stopped her.

"You will have a mug of your own to drink from when you come here, and you must only drink from that."

Anna at once resented this; she made up her mind that she would not use her mug; she would not be different from the other children.

The schoolmaster gave his chair to Anna's mother; she sat down; Anna stood by her. The children had stood up when they came in, and now at a sign from the schoolmaster they began to sing. When they had finished they sat down again, the girls on one side of the room, the boys on the other. Anna was very shy: she tried to hide behind her mother, but the schoolmaster came up and

led her to the side where she girls sat. He showed her a square frame of wood with rods, on which were red, white and green balls, and then left her to play with them whilst he went back to talk to her mother. A big girl—she must have been quite nine—leant over and whispered to her :

"You can play with those things now, but you'll get a whack on your fingers if you count them wrong when you come here to learn."

Whacks on the fingers did not frighten Anna, but she was afraid of the spiteful look in the girl's eyes. She turned away from her, but heard her say in a hoarse whisper to another child on another bench : " She's a little beast and I won't play with her."

Anna felt hurt—just as if some one had hit her. She had looked forward to being with other children, all playing together, all sharing her toys, all quite, quite happy ; and this was what school meant—these dozens of inquisitive, unfriendly little eyes staring at her. She lost all her courage,

ran back to her mother and burst into tears.

"I won't, I won't come to school: it's horrible; I hate it."

Her mother took her on to her knees and spoke to her very gently.

"Look, Anna, you will have that seat at the end of the first row, and there you can see the window above you. Do you see now how the branches of the trees outside move close to it as if they were whispering to the children inside the room? Well, when you come here and you feel unhappy, think that the tree is waving and saying to you from me: 'My little girl must be brave and wise, and when lessons are over she can run, run, run home to me, and I will meet her at the gate and lift her up to kiss her.'"

Anna looked up at the branches which were moving slowly near to the window; then she looked at her mother's eyes. They smiled at each other.

BY the time summer had come, Anna was quite used to her life at school. She walked alone to and from her lessons, as her father wished that she should be as fearless and independent as possible. In spite of the anxiety and disapproval of her mother, her education was a Spartan one, and every Sunday morning Anna went through a drill supposed to strengthen her nerves. Her father held a ladder with one hand—Anna had to climb up one side of it and then down on the other. The ladder was not a high one, yet to her it seemed as high as the poplars by the well. Climbing up was easy, but when the moment came to step over the top and there was nothing more above her to hold on to, her heart beat with fear : She tried to be brave, and no one suspected her terror. Her mother did not like Sunday mornings to be spent in this way ; she wanted to take Anna to Mass

with her, but her father always did as he wished, and Sunday mornings were given up to gymnastics.

Sometimes in the afternoon she walked with her mother to the house of the priest. They nearly always found Father Gabriel sitting in his vaulted room ; it was dark, as the windows were small. He wrote and read near a large oak table, and as soon as the door opened and he saw Anna he drew out the drawer of the table and took up a piece of chocolate for her.

" Well, Anna, has your father at last given his permission for you to be brought up as a Christian ? "

Anna, like all children, disliked to be thought in any way out of the common. She answered quickly :

" I am a Christian, Father : you christened me."

" Yes, but you are now old enough to know that being christened is not everything : you must have instruction as well and follow the way of Christ."

Anna's mother was always distressed during these visits. She wanted Anna to be taught by Father Gabriel, but she had promised her husband that Anna should have no religious education till she was old enough to understand what religion meant. However, Kate and Irma talked to the child of their beliefs, and the religion that she gleaned from them was a nebulous mixture of saints and ghosts—ghosts of the evil, spirits of the good; all ruled over by a censorious Deity who could be made kinder by the gentle influence of Our Lady. All prayers were to be addressed to her, with the request: "Please ask Him to do it for me, to please you."

But saints and angels were never as real to her as the ghosts and fairies whose deeds filled the thoughts and songs of the people. It was in her first term at school that these things came seriously into her life. The spirits of which Kate and Irma had talked were mild phantoms that the sign of the Cross could rule, but the vampires and ghosts

that the children at school talked about were powerful demons, and terror came into her life and fear of the darkness.

At the back of the schoolhouse the girls had arranged a garden. It was made of scooped-up earth, with branches of trees stuck into the ground. On one side of this quickly-faded garden was a long seat made of stones and turf and dried mud, like the seats at the doors of the cottages. When they were tired of playing, the big girls would sit on it, and the little girls sat on stones—they called them stools—near. Then they would talk just as their parents talked, and funerals and ghosts were the subjects most discussed. Sometimes they repeated scandal, but it did not very much interest them : babies, except after the natural consequence of a wedding-feast at which there had been much cake, seemed to them dull things to talk about. One piece of gossip, though, impressed itself on Anna's mind and upset her for many days after she heard it. The big girls whispered together one morning

and looked at Anna. She asked them what they were saying—they laughed. Anna was very curious; she asked again and again to be told what they had said, but they all laughed more and said it was nothing to interest her. She carefully brought out of her pocket five knuckle bones and said to a girl standing near her:

"I will give you these if you tell me."

The child looked at the new set of bones with greedy eyes, but pushed them back into Anna's pocket again.

"No, don't give them to me; I will tell you without. Come away from the others so that they shan't know I told you."

The two sat down side by side on the grass: Anna held the other child's hand. She loved her at once: it was generous of her to give her back her latest and most precious toy, her new set of knuckle bones.

In a mysterious and hoarse whisper, much louder in her anxiety not to be heard than her natural voice, the child began:

"Before you came to school this morning the schoolmaster said to us: 'Have you children heard what has happened at Balog?'

"Of course we all said 'Yes.' I had heard it at the well last night when I went with mother to help her carry water. There they were all talking about the awful thing that had happened at Balog. Well, the schoolmaster said to us: 'None of you must speak about it to Anna: her mother does not want her to know—it may make her ill.'

"But you won't be ill, will you, if I tell you?" The little girl asked this anxiously.

"No, no; but tell me, tell me."

"Well, Béla Saray has killed himself."

"Do you mean that he is dead?"

"Yes, he killed himself because his father wouldn't let him marry an actress that he loved. But what is an actress?" the child asked quickly.

Anna knew. "It's some one who jumps about and pretends to be some one else, like

those men who came to our barn last winter and stood on ropes and dressed as if they were something not themselves. Well, an actress is like that, only a woman, not a man."

The little girl went on :

"They say that before he took up the gun to kill himself he stood on the table and wrote on the ceiling with the smoke of the candle—'Elizabeth.' That was the name of the girl he loved."

Anna was, in fact, much disturbed by the dreadful news. Whenever Elsa came to Balog, the house of her husband's father, Béla had come too. Anna had seen him often : he had taught her to ride on an old horse which they kept, though he was too old to do any work, in a field near the house. But before the meaning of the tragedy had in any way entered into her mind, she was carried away with curiosity as to how he could write with the smoke of a candle, and was determined that directly school was over she would go to Kate's cottage to try.

The school bell rang : all the children ran towards the door ; Anna and her new friend were the last. Before they went in Anna put her arms round the child's neck and kissed her.

"Maria, I will love you always and always."

Maria was responsive :

"And I will love you too, Anna, till I die."

When the weather became too warm for games, the stories of churchyards and skeletons, dark woods and robber murderers were more than ever indulged in, and there were stories of the ghosts of Turks.

One day Sarah Kovács, the oldest girl in the school, led them on to a knoll in the corner of the garden. The top of the knoll was not large, and twenty little girls stood closely clinging to each other.

Sarah, standing in the middle of the knoll, pointed across the plain to where three mounds stood side by side : Anna, near her,

clung to her skirts and followed with her eyes the line of her pointing finger. The sun was strong; the three mounds looked as if they were restless against the burning peace of the horizon. Anna and eighteen little girls waited breathlessly to hear what Sarah had to say.

"No Christian person . . ."

Anna trembled—was she altogether a Christian person?

"No Christian person," repeated Sarah, "would dare to go near to those mounds at night."

No one asked "Why not?" They waited to hear.

"Because"—Sarah's voice became impressive—"those mounds are made of the bodies of dead Turks. At night their ghosts come out, and they hurt people as much as vampires hurt them. They are evil ghosts, but they are dressed in wonderful colours, scarlet and gold and blue. They have turbans on their heads and carry scimitars in their hands."

Anna dared to ask :

"Would they only hurt Christian people ? "

"Of course. Heathens like themselves would be safe, just as ghosts are safe from other ghosts."

Anna clambered down and walked away alone to sit under a tree. There was a wind, and the little leaves on which the sun shone looked like patches of moving gold above her. The other children were near, the boys playing hop-scotch and the girls dancing together in a ring. She shut her eyes and thought of those mounds and of the night. The Turks and darkness were far away, but it was pleasant to think of them there, safe within sound of laughing voices. Anna wished that she could hide herself near the mounds at night, on a night when there was no moon to show the Turks where she was standing. She would wait there in the shadows till the church clock struck twelve. Could she hear it so far away on the plain ? Then large doors would open in each mound,

and a faint light would stream out, like a moon ray, and a green flag would wave in the pale green light. On the three paths of light three armies would march; a drum would sound from each hill; three drums beating slowly above the wailing of sad music, for there would be music; dead gipsies might have been buried there—they were heathens, too. The three armies would march near to where she waited, and, hidden, she would see those wonderful clothes, those turbans of red and green, those coats of gold mail and scimitars covered with precious stones.

They would march slowly across the plain towards Turkey, their faces turned towards their native land. And when they had gone a long, long way, quite out of sight, dawn would rise faintly—a little ray of light—and shrieking with disappointment and rage the three armies would be hurled through the summer-clouded air, back into their prison again. Then the sun would smile on three green mounds, and she would hunt

in the grass for a turquoise fallen from the sword hilt of the man who carried the flag.

While Anna dreamt the girls finished their game. A few went to play with their gardens; others came near to where she lay. They sat down by her and asked:

"What are you thinking about? You look moonstruck."

Anna felt certain that if she told them they would laugh at her, but the directness of her nature made it difficult for her to say what was not true. She answered, but was frightened as she spoke:

"I thought of the Turks."

"Silly baby," said one of the bigger girls. A few boys came near, and, hearing the word "Turk," insisted on Anna telling them what she knew of the Turks.

Anna was confused and miserable: she told them she knew nothing about the Turks. To tease her a girl said:

"She was thinking about them, so she must know something about them, and she must tell us."

Anna, now quite desperate, stood up, and with her back to a big tree felt a little more certain of herself. She began to tell them of her vision of the three mounds ; more children came and sat down quietly on the ground. As Anna went on speaking she lost consciousness of everything near to her, and the spirits of her thoughts became more and more a vivid reality. Her sentences were musical and often her words rhymed. When she said :

On the grass of the mound
A turquoise I found,

a girl laughed and another said :

" Of course she didn't."

At this interruption Anna stopped suddenly and looked down at the little group on the ground. She saw the laughing face and burst into tears.

A fair boy—his face was covered with freckles—came up to her.

" You can finish that story for us ; we like it. Girls are stupid ; they don't under-

stand flags and love of your country or anything of that sort."

Anna smiled. She was quite sensible of the honour of being understood by the boys, especially when, to show her their appreciation of her story, each one in the little group gave her four buttons from a string of buttons which he was carrying. They also showed her the game they played with them, and for a long time she was blissfully happy gambling and flicking buttons with her thumb into a little hole in the ground.

ELIZABETH had tried to keep her promise, but she had not been well enough to take Anna to the Whitsuntide fair ; they had waited to go to the autumn fair instead. When at last the day had come and Elizabeth stood in the nursery in a beautiful black silk dress, very full, quite down to the creases in the ankles of her boots, and wearing a yellow silk handkerchief tied on her head, Anna felt that she was going to live an important day in her life. Her savings had mounted up ; she was taking them all to spend in a purse lent her by Kate. She opened it and counted the pennies : there were thirty of them, six to be spent on her brother, six on herself, and the rest on presents for her father, mother, Elizabeth, Kate and her schoolfriend Maria. Her affection for Maria was still tinged with passionate gratitude, though she had long ago got tired of

playing with the knuckle bones and had given them to the son of the cook, a boy who lived at Mád, and came over once a month to see his mother. Anna would have liked to give at least twenty of the pennies to buy a present for Maria, but in talking out her future purchases with Kate, she had been persuaded to divide her money in a different way.

Before going out, Anna went with Elizabeth into her mother's room: she was standing in a white muslin wrapper before a long mirror—Elsa Sarry was sitting near her. Her mother was plaiting soft blue ribbon into her long, pale gold hair, just as the peasant girls did on Sundays, and both she and Elsa were laughing about it. Elsa was saying:

"Yes, wear it like that when you go to the Szigeti's masked ball, and put on black boots, not red ones, and a short white skirt. I wish I were going too—one can feel sorry and yet still want to dance—and that gipsy music makes one drunk."

Anna thought how much dancing there was in grown-up people's lives. Everybody was always dancing : the village girls went to the oak wood to dance, and other people danced when it wasn't even a feast day or a Sunday. But the strange thing was that in spite of that they did not appear to be always quite happy ; Kate cried nearly every day, and her mother sat sometimes for a long time without a smile on her face. Elizabeth always looked sad ; but Elizabeth was old ; it would be ridiculous of her to dance or even to be very lively. Anna would not have liked that : age should be dignified and rather gloomy, she thought. The old doctor was her ideal of what an old person should be. He had a long white beard and wore black clothes, and he hardly ever smiled, even when he talked to her. When Anna went to see him he sat in a high arm-chair, his feet on a stool covered with elaborate bead-work—very straight and solemn ; he was apparently always filling his pipe from a china vase with the

handle of its cover made like the head of a gnome wearing a pointed cap. Everything surrounding him and Elizabeth was a mystery. Age was mysterious—a far-away curious thing, but something that they said would happen to all. Of course it was not possible that it should happen to her father or mother or Kate ; though they were quite old, they could never become really old : surely they would always laugh just in the same way and run about just as quickly. She supposed that she and her little friends would grow up into being people like them, but never, never into solemn, slow-moving men and women with wrinkles on their faces and knots on their fingers.

Her little brother, John, was brought in. He could not yet speak, but Anna played with him and made him smile as he sat on Irma's lap. When her mother said it was time for them to go, though Anna was impatient to start, she made excuses not to leave the room till Irma had taken the baby away. She loved him, but some of the

jealously she had felt at his birth still disturbed her heart.

At last she and Elizabeth started for the fair. They walked through the garden, out by the stables, and through an untidy common where a boy was guarding geese. Passing close to them, Anna wrapped herself in a large fold of Elizabeth's skirt; thus she felt safer from the hissing creatures. In a narrow lane they came to the inn and the bowling green. Every place was deserted, but just before they came to the high road they passed an acolyte, swinging a censer and followed by Father Gabriel in his cotta.

"Where have they been?" asked Anna.

"Spraying a house with holy water," answered Elizabeth. "Jews have lived in it, and now Catholics have bought it."

"Do Jews leave devils behind them?"

"Who knows, who knows," muttered Elizabeth; "they are a strange people."

The high road was filled with carts, horses, cows, pigs and people, all going to or coming

from the fair : it was always in the same place, on the wide plateau before the road began to go down towards Szánto. It had rained all night ; the mud in places where they could not pick their way covered Anna's boots nearly to her knees. The sun shone, but there were clouds in the sky ; blown by the wind they made great, flying shadows on the plain. At last they came to the booths : in every direction were long rows of them, all covered with flapping tent cloths.

Anna dragged Elizabeth by the hand and they passed quickly by the stalls where fur and leather coats and embroidered frieze were sold ; they hardly looked at the little islands of pottery laid here and there on the much-trampled and entirely muddy grass, and did not even stop by the cake stalls where, amongst gilded nuts and honey cakes, brilliant ginger-bread men hung with sweets stuck in their faces to show eyes, nose and mouth. They walked on, pushing through the crowds, till they found a stall covered

with holy pictures in crude, primitive colours—flaming red hearts and vivid green trees. There were other things, too—rosaries, scapulars and crosses. The man at the stall showed them a bunch of mother-of-pearl rosaries. "These," he impressed on them, "have been blessed by the Pope."

Anna knew what blessed meant, and thought the Pope was the name of a saint.

"Who is Pope?"

The man at the stall answered her:

"He is the Holy Father, and lives in Rome."

Anna thought Rome was the name of another Hungarian village. She asked:

"When will he come to Tállya?"

"He can't go anywhere," laughed the man, "and even if he could, he certainly wouldn't come to this place."

Anna turned away from him; she had forgotten about the Pope, but she was angry at the way the man spoke of her beloved village. She whispered to Elizabeth:

"I don't think he is a Hungarian: don't

let's buy anything from him." Suddenly she asked : " Is Rome as big as Tállya ? " hoping that Elizabeth would say " Oh, no." But Elizabeth told her solemnly :

" The doctor has been there on a pilgrimage and he says it is bigger even than Budapest."

Anna had seen Szerencs and wondered if other towns which had stations were all just like it. She thought a great deal about it, but she had not seen pictures or anything that could help her to imagine anything different from Tállya and Szerencs. Pavements, houses of many stories and houses without gardens she did not know existed. At the next stall, however, all her interest was once more in the fair. She saw a row of small glass cases, each covering two naked figures ; she knew at once that they were Adam and Eve, as a tree stood between them and round the trunk of the tree was twisted the body of a serpent. His head looked out of the branches, his tongue was very long and red.

Anna quickly decided to buy a glass case

for Maria. Vaguely she thought, as these were representations of the first human beings, that they had been actually taken from them, and never doubted but that they were exact likenesses of them. She would give Adam and Eve to Maria as people who went to Kassa or Misskolz gave, as presents to their friends, photographs that had been taken of them there. After a great deal of bargaining between Elizabeth and the woman who kept the booth, a precious glass globe was given to Elizabeth to hold. Every few minutes, as they walked on, Anna pulled down her hand to see if the globe were still quite safe, but after a time she forgot her anxiety in choosing a book for herself. One was found—a very small one with poetry inside as she wished, but unfortunately it was black outside. Anna was disappointed in the cover, but she clung to the book and carried it herself all the time.

The noise was deafening—people bargaining, discussing, shouting for children and friends that they had lost in the crowd; and

above all the human sounds was the more distant roar of animal noises.

Often a distorted figure would be put into a place, wherever it would be most likely to catch the eye of a passer-by and shock him into charity. Anna stood in front of an armless and legless trunk stuck into a wooden frame. Its face, though white and lined by suffering, had a look of sly malice ; its little grey eyes gleamed like those of a snake as it watched the healthy and strong men and women walking past. In a high, unnatural voice it whined :

" Give of your mercy ; in Christ's name give to a poor stricken man." And the plate put by his side was quickly filled with coppers. Anna stood with her eyes wide open, her mouth tightly shut, a puzzled, frightened look on her face. Elizabeth tried to draw her away, but the child refused to move ; her expression slowly changed to disgust and fear ; she turned to Elizabeth.

" I don't understand ; I don't understand. What is he ? What is he ? "

At that moment the fat girl who helped at the grocer's shop passed by.

"Why, don't you know? that is what the gipsies do to people. They steal them when they are children, and then distort them and show them like this. Oh, they make a lot of money: people here have kind hearts."

Anna looked again; then she threw down by the man all the rest of her pennies and ran as fast as she could, without seeing or caring where she went. Elizabeth with difficulty hobbled after her, calling out; "John, Maria, Michael, stop the child; she's frightened." But there were many strangers from other places, and the villagers to whom she appealed by name only laughed; they thought, if the child wanted to run, why not let her? no one would hurt her.

Just as she was getting near to the place where the horses were tethered, Paul saw her, rushed forward and lifted her on to his shoulder, and took her safely back to the agitated Elizabeth.

Anna said nothing; she was ashamed and

could not explain to them what had driven her to flight. It was not altogether fear for herself, as Elizabeth imagined, but a sudden terror for the thing in front of her. The gipsies had done that, done what, she thought; what had they done, what was he? He was not a man, he was not a woman, he was not a child; what was he? She felt that he belonged to the supernatural, was one with ghosts and vampires; he was a thing of horror and to fly from. A woman selling pottery turned a wicker crate upside down for Anna and Elizabeth to sit on. Anna moved very close to Elizabeth, and for a little time was not inclined to go away, but amongst the gaily-painted pots, pitchers and bowls it was quieter, and she soon recovered herself. She had decided to go on when she remembered:

"I have no more money; how can I get those presents?"

The corners of her mouth were turned down; tears were very close.

Elizabeth opened her purse and showed

it to her. In its depths was a shining coin.

Anna became more cheerful.

"A new farthing—how pretty!"

Elizabeth took it out and held it between her finger and her thumb.

"A farthing—no, indeed, it's gold and you can spend it all just as you like."

Anna put out her arms as if to embrace the whole fair.

"And I could have all that, all that."

Feeling as if the whole world were hers, Anna walked once more into the crowd, buying here and there till both she and Elizabeth, covered with their purchases, looked like travelling hawkers.

They had watched marionettes, had eaten chicken cooked with paprika and cream, had drunk pomegranate juice, and were both very tired when they found themselves on the high road which divided the fair into two parts. It was a river of mud. At the side were long carts with ladder sides, all filled with merchandise. The middle was kept

free for fast moving carriages. Elizabeth and Anna stood waiting to cross when a carriage came towards them, going quicker than all the rest. Elsa sat on the box, driving a pair of greys ; Anna's mother sat by her side. She saw Anna at once, said something quickly to Elsa, and the carriage stopped.

"You must be tired," she called out to them. "You and Elizabeth can get into this, and, after we have been dropped at Balog, Elsa will send you home."

They clambered up into a kind of double dogcart. Anna sat at the back between Elizabeth and a groom ; both held her tight as the horses dashed down the hill, past the ruined shrine, and into a long avenue of trees that led to Balog.

The house was an old one, very long, and with all the rooms, high and vaulted, leading into each other. The entrance door from the drive was in a courtyard surrounded by the stables and houses for the servants. In the middle of the house, on the garden side, was a large room vaulted like all the others,

but even higher. French windows opened from this on to a terrace ; from there wide, low steps led down to the garden.

On their arrival, Anna was taken into this room ; her mother went away with Elsa ; Elizabeth disappeared. There were voices in the garden ; Anna walked to the terrace to see who was there. A group of men and women were talking together near the artificial lake which came quite close to the house, and a very dignified old man, with white hair and very dark clear eyes, was walking up the steps alone. Seeing Anna, he stopped.

" Well, Anna, I am glad to see you ; you are a pretty little girl."

Anna drew herself up.

" No, I am not pretty ; I am like a boy, and," she added very quickly, " I want Mother and Elizabeth."

A forlorn feeling had crept over her ; she was afraid she would cry.

The dignified old man walked very slowly into the room and rang a bell. When a servant came he said :

"Tell Elizabeth to come."

Anna was relieved. Though the dignified old man was her godfather and Elsa's father-in-law, and she had often seen him, still he was a stranger, and there were strangers outside who might at any moment come in and speak to her and tease her. Her godfather was certainly kind and spoke to her just as if she were a grown-up person; he did not throw her into the air, nor did he try to tickle her neck, nor pull her hair; and he did not ask to kiss her.

Anna disliked being kissed as much as she disliked having her hair pulled, though when her mother kissed her she would shut her eyes and say:

"Kiss me again. Your kiss is soft, soft; it is like walking with my face into a cobweb."

Her godfather led her by the hand to a large cabinet; he opened the doors of it and brought out a trayful of snuff-boxes. Some had pictures inside them, others little mirrors; she liked opening and shutting them, but dreaded all the time that the people in the

garden would come in. She listened for the sound of Elizabeth's feet on the polished floor—at last she came in. Her godfather bowed to Elizabeth and asked her if she felt stronger ; then he said :

"Take Anna to wherever she wishes to go ; she feels dull in this room alone with an old man."

Though he smiled as he spoke, Anna knew she had been rebuked; she wanted to tell him that she wasn't dull, but the shyness which made her fear the entrance of the strangers made her unable to speak.

She and Elizabeth had gone out of the room, and Elizabeth was just shutting the door, when Anna suddenly pushed past her and ran back into the room. Holding her hat in her hands and in her anxiety crunching up the brim, she stood in front of her godfather.

"I like you and I like the boxes, and I wasn't dull with you, but I didn't like those people outside."

After saying this all in one breath she

flew towards the door, and she heard a quiet laugh as she shut it after her. Elizabeth never scolded, but she looked as if she were not at all pleased and asked almost impatiently : "Where do you want to go?" But before Anna could answer she added :

"Your mother won't be pleased ; she wanted those ladies to see you."

Anna felt it was useless to try to explain even to Elizabeth : even Elizabeth could not know that she did not like being pulled about by people to whom you couldn't say "don't" or "let me go," and if she stamped her feet at them her father and mother would scold her. With the peasants it was different, and in any case they were ever so much more fun.

Elizabeth asked again :

"What do you want to do?"

They were standing close to a flight of stairs going downwards. Below it was quite dark ; Anna looking down could not see where the steps ended. Before she answered Elizabeth she asked :

"What is this?"

"That is a staircase going down to the kitchen."

A door below was opened; light came through it and reached up to where they were standing. In the light stood a man wearing a white apron and with a white cap on his head: in his right hand he held an egg-whisk; with a slight bow, he swept his left hand towards the open door.

"Won't you come down and see the kitchen?"

Anna had almost decided to ask Elizabeth to take her to see the room where Béla had written on the ceiling with candle-smoke, but before her was a new adventure—something she had never done before. Very carefully, holding on to the wooden banisters, she stepped down an indoor staircase. It was the first time in her life that she had seen one.

A FEW Christmas Days Anna could now remember. In these there had been no shadow of doubt in her mind that Santa Claus had flown down straight from Heaven, and the devil who had been with him had climbed up from hell. She had been speechless from terror, hearing the rattling of the chains in the devil's sack, and even when after having tremblingly said a prayer Santa Claus had given her sweets and cakes, she was not happy till the devil was sent out of the room. Santa Claus called the shepherds. They came in carrying a large box with a manger inside it lighted with candles. In the manger was a figure of the Virgin and the infant Christ, and close to them were beautiful brown cows, and kneeling near them and in front of the Child were the three Wise Men. The shepherds wore their shaggy fur coats, and as they sang

about the birth of Christ, they hit the ground with their long sticks. After they had finished, Santa Claus gave them and every one else presents and sweets, and though the devil rattled his chain outside the door, he was never called in to take anyone away.

Anna had learnt many things at school, and to doubt the supernatural character of Santa Claus was one of them. She was certain, though, that the Christmas tree was brought from Heaven, but that too now she could no longer believe. It happened in this way. Two days before Christmas Day she was out in the garden playing with her sledge. She had wandered near to the coach-house, and as one of the wide doors was a little open, she crept in. It was one of her greatest pleasures to play with the carriages—to pretend by tying string to the poles that she was driving herself. She had to wait a moment to get used to the darkness, and as gradually out of a black nothing objects began to evolve, she saw

that the big sledge was quite close to her. On it was a strange alarming shape. It was a tree. When she could see better she climbed on the sledge and looked at the tree quite close. She touched it, and then she knew. This dark, gloomy greenness was what would later on be decked out into a beautiful fairy-tree covered with lights and presents, and it would not be angel's work. She sat there for a long time, dazed, unhappy, thinking about her dreadful discovery. She had lost the angels. What would go next? Paul was singing in the stables. He sang a very sad song:

If my love forsake me, how shall I live?
How can I live when my heart is broken?

The stable walls were thin. Anna heard too the horses moving about kicking and pulling at the ropes that tied them. There was a dull thud whenever the rope was taut and the round wooden ball stopped it going any further. The sun was shining on the snow. Anna could see it through the

slightly open doors. But though she was cold where she sat, she felt tied to the gloom in an ecstasy of despair. She pulled the branches of the tree. The acrid smell of the fir-needles pleased her. Paul still sang :

Oh my beloved—at the little green gate, do you remember ?
When I held you in my arms, and the moon was our friend ?

His song was like a cry. Anna crept down from the sledge and walked into the stables. Paul was sitting on a three-legged stool. He sang with his head bent down, hidden in his hands. He looked up when Anna asked :

" Are you ill, Paul ? "

" I'll—I—Yes—I am dying. I am ill and dying of love."

" Whom do you love ? "

" Kate. Kate of course, but she will not look at me. She is cruel."

" But Paul, when you sang, you said you held her in your arms. She must have looked at you then."

"Held her in my arms! Kate, never! And that is why I am dying. I can hold twenty of the prettiest girls in the village in my arms, but never Kate, and it will kill me."

Anna became practical.

"You had better ask her to marry you."

"Marry! That's a nice idea! What do I want with marriage? And I don't suppose she'd look at me even like that. Marry her! And I know what no one else knows, that Andrew Szep killed his wife because he wanted to marry Kate. They couldn't quite prove that he did it, but he is cobbling boots in prison all the same. Kate is waiting till he comes out—and then I shall never get her. I wish I were dead."

"I'll tell Kate to marry you. If she marries the other man, he may kill her too!"

"She wouldn't care. Our girls are like that. But you will not tell her, will you, that I said anything about Andrew?" he asked anxiously. "She would come and box my ears, and heaven only knows what

would happen then. I love her, and I am mad."

Paul threw himself on to a rough bed built into a corner of the stable and sobbed as he buried his head in his sheepskin coat.

Anna bewildered, ran out and met Kate carrying the afternoon milk into the house. She did not say anything to her about Paul, but walked slowly by her side watching her. Kate carried a flat pole on her shoulders. At either end of it, hanging by chains, was a bucket filled with milk. Anna asked her to stop. Kate put the buckets down on the ground. The milk looked blue near the clear white snow.

Anna knelt down to drink. When she stood up again her face was covered with milk. Kate laughed. Anna wiped her face with Kate's skirt, then asked very solemnly :

"Why do all the men love you ?"

Kate became very red.

"Who has been talking nonsense about love to you ?"

Anna did not answer, but asked instead :

"Does love make people mad?"

"Always."

"Have you ever been mad, Kate?"

"Yes, once, but I am not going to talk about it."

Kate put the pole on her shoulders again, and went towards the house.

Anna caught hold of the chain of one of the buckets.

"Do stop one minute. I want to hear about love."

"You will know about it in time," laughed Kate. Then suddenly she became very grave and drew in her breath.

"It hurts.—It hurts."

And then she threw back her head and smiled very slowly.

"But it is worth every bit of the pain."

Anna watched the dimples at the corners of Kate's mouth, and thought how white her teeth looked.

Kate went into the kitchen. Anna did not think any more about love, but picked up a stone and tried to smash the ice on the

top of a water-butt. She had nearly succeeded in getting at the water when Irma came out.

"You have got to come in. There is a visitor for you.

"Who?"

"Don't ask questions, but come."

Anna did not want to go indoors. She had an uneasy feeling that in some way the sorrows of the day were going to be added to. She had already discovered that unpleasant moments are less acute out of doors, and decided not to go in.

Irma caught hold of her arm. Anna promptly sat down on the snow. Irma then grasped her round the body and dragged her along; Anna kicked violently, but Irma was winning and they were close to the house. The struggle might have ended in a different way, as Anna began to bite Irma's wrist, but then she heard her mother saying very gently:

"Irma, let the child go, she will walk by herself."

Anna was ashamed, and when her mother asked her to beg Irma's pardon, she did so quite humbly, then followed her mother indoors.

The change from the cold air into the stoveheated and overheated rooms made her impatiently tear off her coat. She felt little curiosity as to whom her visitor might be, but a great regret at leaving the garden. In her mother's sitting-room, standing by the window was a lovely little girl. Anna at first thought she was a doll. Her eyes were round and large and she stood quite still; she wore a white lace dress, with a pale blue sash, and her long fair curls were tied up with blue ribbon. Her feet were in white shoes and her stockings were white too. Anna's mother went up to her and led her forward.

"Piroska has come to tea with you."

Anna for a few seconds was silent, unable to believe that this marvellous creature could really be there to play with her. When she recovered from her surprise—Anna's

emotions, though fleeting, were intense—she went up to her and led her by the hand into the nursery.

Tea was ready. Irma and John were sitting at the table. Piroska and Anna sat down side by side. Anna was too much excited to eat. She gazed at Piroska and asked :

" Where do you come from ! "

Piroska was eating bread and butter ; she put it down before speaking. Anna had already thought of a dozen possible answers to her question. She had decided that Piroska would say : " I come from the little sugar house in the fairy's wood, and I will take you back there with me," when Piroska said in a very prim voice :

" I come from Kassa."

Irma looked up smiling.

" I come from there too."

Anna, afraid that Irma would go on talking about Kassa, broke in hurriedly :

" Are you going to live with us ? "

" No. I am only stopping in Tállya for a few weeks with my aunt."

Anna had just begun to ask Piroska if she did not think Tállya the most lovely place in the world when Irma interrupted :

" Don't ask so many questions. It's rude."

" But I want to know."

" Well don't do it, that's all."

Piroska did not talk much. After tea Anna tried to amuse her with toys, but Piroska sat on a little chair and did not seem to take interest in anything. They looked out of the window. The sun had set, but in a field higher than the garden, the snow was rose red from a ray that they could not see. Anna looking at it became unhappy again. Piroska did not amuse her, and she longed to be out of doors.

Irma suggested that they should play Hide and Seek. There were two cupboards and the stove to hide behind. Then she and John went into another room.

" Be good," she called out to them. " I shall only be away a few moments."

Hardly had the door shut than Anna jumped about with joy :

"Let's go out, and I'll pull you round the garden in my sledge."

Piroska looked more cheerful.

"Yes. Yes. Let's go, but I don't know where my coat is."

"Never mind. I will give you one of mine."

Anna opened a large wardrobe, and like an agile monkey climbed up by the ledges till she could reach the top one. Clinging on with one hand she threw down the fur coats and began to hunt for a pair of boots for Piroska. These she found on the bottom shelf, but as there were no hats to be seen anywhere, they ran out of the house bareheaded. Before they got to the place where the sledge was kept, Piroska wailed:

"I am very cold."

Unless Anna was dreaming, she was quick in her decisions.

"Well then, let's roll down the terrace. That will make us warm."

After a few rolls, Piroska's curls were covered with snow, the fur coat had come

undone, her lace dress was torn, but she was enjoying herself and did not care.

In the midst of their shrieks of delight, they heard bells and saw a sledge with lights on it going into the courtyard.

"That is for me," Piroska shouted to Anna, who had rolled down again.

Anna clambered up the incline. She heard voices calling them and turned to Piroska.

"It's no good. We must go back."

Hand to hand they ran towards the sledge, and as they came near, Anna heard her mother crying to Irma :

"How could you let them go out ? "

Irma answered very crossly :

"I only left the room for a moment. It is all Anna's fault you can be certain. She is worse than ten boys."

When they saw Piroska's dress they were really angry, and Matilda Agai—Piroska's aunt—turned to Anna's mother :

"Ida, you should be firmer with Anna. She is a very rough little girl."

Anna's father laughed :

" It's really my fault. I think that girls should be brought up just like boys. Perhaps with Anna it's a mistake. She is naturally too wild."

But after Piroska and her aunt had driven away, he turned to Anna and did not smile.

" Come into my room as soon as you are tidy."

Anna suffered ten minutes of banging about at the hands of Irma. At last, fairly clean, and in a white cotton frock, she was put outside the nursery door with the parting shot :

" Now you can go to your father's room. You hate the dark, and you can go alone."

As quickly as she could, Anna ran though the dark rooms till she saw the chink of light under her father's door. She heard him speaking. His voice sounded angry. She was frightened and stood still. Once she had seen Irma with her ear at the keyhole, and as now the keyhole was just

where her ear could comfortably hear, she waited to listen. Her father was saying :

" It's no good, Ida. We must send Anna to England. My cousin is sending his two girls, and Anna can go with them. We can never bring her up properly here. Every one spoils her, and she is only happy with the peasants. She becomes worse every day."

Anna sat down on the ground perplexed. What could it be ? Did they mean that they would send her away from Tállya, away from her mother ? It was not possible that such a thing could happen to any child. Not possible that any child could be naughty enough to lose her country and her home. A tumult of passionate revolt burnt in her heart. It could not be true. They could not mean it. It must not be. It was not just.

Then she heard her mother's voice :

" Yes, dear, I know it would be better for her sake that she went, but you know that her love for this place and the people

here is quite uncanny. It would be too much of a shock for her. She could never bear it."

Anna got up and tried to open the door. The handle was just out of her reach. She could only make a jangling sound with it as she touched it with the tips of her fingers. Her mother, hearing the noise, quickly opened the door. Anna threw herself on the ground before her.

"Yes. Yes. You know. You know. If I leave Tállya I shall die. I never, never want to see any other place but this."

Her father lifted her up and kissed her. He looked over the little form at his wife.

"You are right. We must wait. She must get used to it by degrees. She cannot go yet—not yet."

But from that day Anna never lost a dread from her heart.

THE winter passed quickly, and in it were days more wonderful than any that had come before. Outside the school gate were ten cellars—ten long mounds one after the other sloping downwards with the road—a splendid switchback for sledging. At the end of the run there was danger, too. The road was very rough. At the side of it was a stream, and, though this was frozen over, it had high banks. There were also the trunks of many willow trees. All these things made the run down more of an adventure. After school hours, as long as the frost lasted, there was half an hour of joy for those who liked a little danger. Every boy had a sledge. Some of the sledges were only made of two bits of wood with another piece of wood laid on them, but those that a carpenter had made, though of the same pattern as the others, were much stronger, and two

children could sit on them. Anna guided hers. Maria—still her best friend—sat at the back. The girls who were too frightened to go down stood on the top of the first cellar, sneering at those who were braver. They said it was not nice for girls to tumble about with boys, and they laughed very much, and looked quite pleased when two sledges got caught, and everybody in them was upset. A few of the girls followed Anna in whatever she did, her recklessness pleased them, and if there was often uncertainty as to what would be the end of some of the delightful plans that she suggested, still there was nearly always a great deal of fun.

The spring was unusually wet. Once or twice Anna tried, with the help of her friends, to make a dam across the road near to her house, but when they only succeeded in flooding the cellar of the Lutheran pastor, there was a great fuss, and an end put to the only pleasure of a dull spring. They had tried to float paper boats on the stream in the middle of the road, but the

water ran too fast, and they could not keep up with the boats that managed to keep afloat.

The summer began early with very warm weather. The boys talked a great deal about bird's-nesting. A party of them, followed by Anna and Maria, had played truant one afternoon, and had hunted for nests in the wood near to the Jews' burial-ground. They were found out and punished, and no one had the courage to go bird's-nesting again that year at school time. Anna always remembered that afternoon, with its promise of an eternity of summer, the peace of the woods, broken only by the sound of excited children's voices and the song of birds. She enjoyed, too, hunting, seeking ; but though she was delighted when she found her first egg, and had liked the taste of it when she had sucked out the yolk, yet she had felt not a little unhappy thinking of the poor bird who would come back to find her nest empty.

These days were impressed upon Anna's

mind more because from the moment that the great dread had come into her soul she had lost a child's belief that life as it is will be the same for ever. She had become conscious of her surroundings, almost as if she had reasoned out the fact that those hills, that plain, the burning summers and the icy, wind-driven snows of the winters that she loved, were only to be hers for a little while, and this knowledge, though she was not herself aware of it, guided her actions and her life.

Often for quite a long time she would forget what her father had said; but many things reminded her. One day the schoolmaster ended a lesson with the words:

"And the world goes round."

He had no globe to show the children in what way the world went round, and Anna at once jumped at the idea that one place moved to another. She felt that in this was a new danger, and a new means of taking her away.

The schoolmaster thought that she looked inattentive. He called out to her:

"Anna, what did I say?"

Anna stood up.

"You said that the world went round, and please I don't want it to go round."

The schoolmaster looked at her sharply, but not unkindly.

"Will you explain what you mean by wishing the laws of the Almighty to be altered to suit your desires?"

Anna saw everything floating round her as if she were in a mist. She knew that the schoolmaster was waiting, and with a great effort she said, much louder than she meant to:

"I don't want Tállya to be moved anywhere else."

Many of the girls giggled, but the schoolmaster said "Hush," sternly. He turned again towards Anna:

"Your affection for the place of your birth does you credit, but I fear that you do not understand the principles of rotation."

Anna certainly did not understand a word he was saying. She was unpleasantly con-

scious that in some way she had been stupid, and knew that she would be teased about it later by the big girls.

At home she never asked questions about England. She did not wish to remind her parents about her father's threat. One day she found upon the table in his room an English illustrated paper. In it was a large picture of a ship struggling with high rough waves. When her father came into the room, he found her looking at it, and said :

" That is a ship. It was wrecked in the Channel."

Anna wanted to know what the Channel was, and heard what was for her the ominous explanation that it was the sea between England and the rest of Europe.

She shut the paper quickly and ran out of the room. For ten minutes or more she waited in the garden near her father's room till she saw him go out again, followed by the dog he loved best—a white sheep-dog from the puszta. As quickly as she could, Anna ran back into the room, took up the

paper with the picture in it, and went with it into the field where the black cow lived. A well had just been dug there. Anna looked through the planks that covered it. Below all was dark. There was no sparkle of water. She pushed the paper through the hole between the planks and heard it fluttering down. Anna felt that it was something definitely done with—finished—almost as if she had thrown the Channel through a hole in the world on to another sphere.

Lately, in another corner of the field, a pigsty had been built. It was quite big, and had a door. Above the trough were wooden flaps just like windows ; they could be opened and shut. Anna had taken possession of this as her secret house, and lived in dread of the arrival of the pigs and the loss of her castle. On a ledge made by the broad planks that lined the sty she had put a row of plates ; the trough she had turned into a bed for an army of wooden soldiers. When the flaps were shut it was gloomy ; only a little light came through chinks in

the wall, but the mystery, and above all the thought that no one knew she lived there, made her quite happy. She had smuggled in straw to make a bed. She lay down on it to think.

"So that is how the sea looks. That is what the sea is—terrible and dangerous, and to get to England if she were made to go, she would have to go in a boat on waves, like those in the picture. Probably she too would be wrecked, and would not be buried with all her friends, and certainly no candles would be put on her grave on All Souls night, because she would not have a real grave at all. It was all very difficult. Unexpected things were always happening. There was not much peace in a little girl's life. Her gloom made her sing a song Maria the cook had taught her, all about graves, and night, and not being able to hear nor to see. To make everything worse, the black cow was moaning all the time in a shed near. At last Anna could not bear it any longer. She crept out, peeping first

through the chink of the door to see that no one was near. Then she walked slowly to Kate's cottage and told her that the black cow was moaning.

"I know. I know, poor beast. She is crying for her calf. It was taken from her this morning. I am just going to the butcher to bring back some of its blood on a piece of bread for her to eat. That will stop her fretting any more."

Anna walked with Kate to the butcher's shop, and whilst Kate went in to dip a piece of bread into the calf's blood, Anna sat down by Elizabeth. She was sitting outside her door knitting the heel of a stocking. Anna's mind was still unsettled by the sea picture. She wanted to hear about England from some one who would not know why she asked about it.

"Elizabeth, have you heard of England?"

"Surely, my lamb. Julia Kálmány went there about thirty years ago."

"Would she tell me about it if I went to ask her?"

"She would if she hasn't forgotten all about it. She was always a flighty one, and three husbands married and buried have made her lose the little brains she had."

"Then her love must be very dead."

"Good heavens, child, what do you mean?"

"Paul says that marriage means the death of love, so if she married three times she cannot have any more love left."

Elizabeth shook her head.

"Anna, Anna. You hear too much and you see too much, but for mercy's sake don't think about all you see and hear."

Kate came out carrying the soaking bread on the palm of her hand. Anna told her she was going to see Julia Kálmány, but Kate said she must go back with her as it was getting late.

The next day was a Sunday. The gymnastics were cut short and finished early. The travelling bookman had come that morning, and Anna's father had bought a

German book about the scientific cultivation of the vine. He wanted to read it at once, and told Anna she could go away and play.

Anna walked to the end of the garden, and there with the help of low-growing branches crept on to the top of the wall. It was tiled with shingles and sloped. She had to cling to the edge to keep from slipping down. No one could see her; she was hidden by the branches of trees, but she had a good view of the road below.

Very soon people began to pass on their way to church. The old women were all in black, with black silk handkerchiefs on their heads, the younger ones were dressed in brighter colours. They all carried, besides their prayer-books, a carefully folded white handkerchief and a sprig of rosemary or thyme. For a few moments no one passed. Then Anna saw Isaiah coming down the hill walking quickly, followed by a small crowd of boys and girls. They were shouting after him a rhyme against Jews. He did not seem to notice them. As he shuffled by in

his long black coat, his eyes were calm and he was smiling to himself. Anna could still hear the sound of the jingling verse in the distance when a group of girls came near chattering and laughing. She longed to run after them, to go with them, and was just thinking of shouting out to them to wait, when she saw her mother and Irma with John coming out of the gate into the road. Hardly had they gone out of sight, when a very ragged beggar man sat down by the wall under her. One of his feet was wrapped round with dirty white linen ; it looked twice the size of the other foot. Anna was curious about this, and at last leant down to ask :

"Why is your foot so big ?"

The old man, startled, began to whine :

"I am only a poor old man. Let me be. Let me be."

"I am not going to hurt you. I am not going to throw stones at you. Why is your foot so big ?"

He looked up craftily.

"If you throw me down a farthing I will show you."

"Well, wait a minute. I will come down and give it to you."

"You won't set the dogs at me?"

"The dogs are all chained up this morning except the Mite. He is indoors with my father. He is called the Mite," she explained, "because he is very big."

Trying to get up—the old man groaned wearily.

"I am going away, but merciful God how my bones ache!"

"You must wait," ordered Anna. "I will be there in a moment."

Anna clambered down and ran to the kitchen.

"Maria, please give me a farthing for a poor man."

Maria surlily opened a drawer, took out a handkerchief black from use as a purse for copper coins. Without a word she gave a farthing to Anna.

Maria's gloom was not a matter of sur-

prise to Anna. She knew that Maria had had a disappointment, and that whatever it was it had made it difficult for her to laugh. Paul had told Anna this. He had also added that of course the only disappointment a woman could have was because of a man.

When Anna stood panting close to the old man, he had already unwound a great deal of the bandage round his foot. She gave him the farthing. He went on undoing rolls and rolls of linen. Anna wondered if he would ever stop, and at last said:

"I don't think your foot is going to be any bigger than the other one."

"It isn't bigger, but there is a terrible sore on it."

"Is it all red and green and blue?"

"It is indeed, and white too. It's mighty bad. It keeps me awake at night, and I can never forget it in the day."

Anna moved away.

"If you don't mind, please, I think I won't look at it."

Very quickly she ran till she came to the gate in the wall of Julia Kálmány's house. She pushed it open and went in.

The garden was enclosed and sheltered by the backs of other houses. In these were no windows, and creepers and roses climbed over the rough-cast walls. The middle of the garden was a tangle of bushes of tea-roses. They grew just as they liked and covered everything. Heavy branches of them rested on the ground and crept over the paths. Anna bent down to smell the flowers and as she did so some one called her. It was Susan, Julia Kálmány's servant, standing by the kitchen door.

"So you have come to see us at last. I thought you had forgotten that I make the best quince jelly in Tállya."

"No, I hadn't forgotten, but I go to school now, and there is so much to do."

"Yes, you pickle. I hear of your doings often enough. Come in now. My old lady will be glad to see you. She is ailing and wants to be cheered up."

Anna went into the house through the kitchen, followed by Susan through two very empty and comfortless rooms. Susan opened a door in the last room and said without going in :

"There she is by the window as usual. Go in."

In a low arm-chair on wheels sat a very old lady. She did not turn round as the door opened, but said in a querulous voice :

"What is it? What is it?" Anna went forward.

"It is I—Anna."

The old lady then spoke clearly and in a different tone.

"So it's you, Anna. I thought you had quite forgotten me. I have not seen you for a long time."

Anna did not know what to say, so sat down on a little stool in front of the old lady and smiled at her.

"Well, you haven't much to say for yourself to-day, but never mind. I like to see that smile of yours. You will find many to

love you if you smile like that when you are a big girl."

Anna wanted at once to ask about England, but the old lady began to speak again quite fast :

"To think that I should look forward to the visits of a little girl for amusement. I who used to be the wildest one there ever was for gaiety and pleasure. But that is all long ago, and old age brings us nothing but regrets and shaking limbs."

She held out delicate emaciated hands towards Anna. They trembled even when she put them together on her lap.

"I had a pretty smile too," she went on. "At least my Julius always told me so. I have never shown you the picture of my Julius have I? Here, Anna, open that drawer." She pointed to a chest of drawers near to her chair. "It is there in the corner, in a black leather case."

Anna rummaged about in the drawer. Julia Kálmány spoke all the time.

"I was only fifteen when I married—he

was barely twenty. How beautiful he was, and how wild, though he was never strong. I think we must have danced and laughed and kissed without ever stopping right through two whole years.

Anna looked up.

"Here in Tállya?"

"Of course not—in Kassa. But haven't you found the miniature yet? It is under that piece of yellow silk."

Anna brought the case to her. It was opened by the shaking hands, and as Anna looked at a boyish face, two laughing brown eyes looked straight out of the picture at her.

"I do like him," she exclaimed.

"Yes, he was good to look at. When he died, for months I was like a mad creature from grief. Oh, dear, to think that we can be so happy and so unhappy, and that when we are old and look back on it all, one is as the other. The happiness is hidden in the pain and both are as dreams that have passed."

A tear fell on the white lace at her throat. Anna thought it all very strange. Though she was used to Julia Kálmány's meditations on the past, she could not in the least understand her regrets for it. To her it was as if Aunt Julia lamented a youth which it was hardly possible she could ever have known.

The old lady was still speaking. Anna looked at the room ; she knew every inch of it. Nothing was ever changed. There were two niches in the wall facing her. One had a green silk curtain over it, the other was protected by glass doors, and through these china cups and silver vases could be seen. Between the niches hung a large painting of Julia Kálmány at the age of twenty. It was the picture of a pretty dark girl with smooth hair parted in the middle. The dress, cut low, was trimmed with lace, and over one shoulder she wore a hussar jacket edged with fur.

She stopped speaking. Anna listened to the loud ticking of the clock on the wall. The old lady looked out of the window

mumbling to herself. Anna counted the tick-tacks of the clock, and decided that when fifty tick-tacks were passed she would ask about England. She had got to tick number thirty-one, when suddenly Susan began to sing in the kitchen. They could hear her, she had a hard loud voice.

The old lady turned round again to speak.

"I was twenty when I married for the second time; soon after we moved to Pozsony. He—Géza, was a wild one too. I never could believe a man was a man unless he was half a devil. He had a passion for gipsy music—I had too, so I cannot blame him for what happened. A gipsy band would follow us wherever we went. In the winter we danced to it, and in the summer, all of us—we had plenty of friends then—would cross the Danube by the bridge of boats. We sat near the water whilst the gipsies played to us. Sometimes I looked at the rushing swirling river. There were dark rings like holes in the water, and I wondered if the drowned dead looked up through

them at the clouds in the sky. And when the music tore my heart, I remembered my Julius and his laughing face, and I would cry ; but nobody paid any attention to that. Unless that music makes you laugh, it makes you cry. Well, at the end of four years Géza shot himself. He had spent all his money and mine too."

The old lady broke off suddenly and looked at Anna——

" Dear me, child, what is the matter with you? How you stare. What have I been saying? Somehow to-day the sun and the roses make me remember the days when the sun and the roses were part of my life."

Anna had been staring in astonishment, wondering how it could have been possible that Aunt Julia had ever been anywhere else but in that chair and by that window. She had never seen her anywhere else.

Fortunately the old lady did not wait for an answer to her questions. She took up a bell from the table near her and rang it. Susan came in smiling :

"I know what it is. You rang for me to get the quince jelly."

Anna jumped up and went with Susan into a roomy cupboard. Anna liked the jelly, but there was something in the cupboard that she liked even better—the wooden bust of a girl. Once it had been painted, but the colours were now very faint. There was only a little shadow of blue where blue eyes had been. The whole bust was covered with worm holes.

Susan lifted down a jar of quince jelly. Anna carried the bust into the room and put it near to her stool. She had still some jelly on her plate when Susan said she must go back to the kitchen. Anna asked if she could go with her into the garden to pick leaves to make a wreath for the bust.

After ten minutes in the garden she came back with a basket full of rose leaves, and sat down again on the little stool.

Julia Kálmány gave her a reel of cotton and Anna began to make the wreath. All the time she hoped to hear something about

England, but did not know how to begin to speak about it. The old lady asked so many questions about school.

When the wreath was finished she put it on to the painted head. Julia Kálmány looked at it critically :

"That is a pretty wreath, and the poor head, that was once pretty too."

Anna then burst out with :

"I like it to be like this. If it were pretty and new you would not let me play with it, and I can't play with it at all if I go to England."

The old lady opened her eyes very wide.

"Go to England, indeed. Go to the moon."

Anna did not discuss that point with her, but asked straight out :

"When were you in England ? "

"In England. ¡Oh yes. Yes, a long time ago, but it was all the fault of Ödön, my last husband. He had a mania for travelling. As if Vienna was not far enough for any civilized person, he made me go with him

all the way to England. Directly we got there he found letters saying that there was serious trouble about his money affairs, so as soon as we arrived we packed off again. I was never so happy in my life as when I saw the castle of Pozsony again."

Anna begged:

"Don't you remember anything about England?"

"No. Not much."

"But something—some little thing?"

"Well, I just remember that from the sea the earth of England looked quite white. I thought it must make people's shoes very dirty when they walked."

"Don't you remember any more?"

"No. Nothing more."

Anna was bitterly disappointed. She had hoped for accounts of wonderful cities and dangerous seas. For a while she stood silent near to the window looking at the roses in the garden, then asked abruptly:

"May I go home?"

The old lady with difficulty leant forward to give her a kiss.

"Yes, dear, go now, but come again soon, very soon."

WHEN her father found out that twice in the summer term Anna had not been to school for two whole afternoons he was very angry. Even her mother said that she was afraid Anna would only be fit to be a little goose girl and nothing better. This made Anna think of going away to join the little girl that looked after the geese near the village of Ond. She had often seen her and envied her sitting near to the running stream by the knotted willow trees. Bare-legged, very dirty, hardly clothed, she looked happy sitting on the grass close by the mass of noisy, moving whiteness, the hundreds of geese that she guarded. Anna had noticed that she was not afraid of the geese, and made up her mind that they were harmless animals to those they knew. This was important. In making friends with the goose girl, she would make friends with the geese.

When her father got the note from the schoolmaster telling him that Anna had played truant, he sent for her. Directly she came into the room he asked :

" Where did you go on Tuesday and Thursday afternoons ? "

Anna knew it was useless to pucker up her face and pretend to try and remember ; she told him the truth.

In a stream which passed close to the shrine on the Mád road was a shady pool where people went to bathe. On her way to school Anna had met a party of girls going there. They had asked her to go with them, and as she very much wanted to go, she went. There were rough steps cut out of the grassy banks of the stream. They were slippery ; Anna had qualms at walking down. One of the girls went into the stream, splashed herself with water so that her shift would keep down, then held out her hands to Anna. But Anna, uncertain whether she wanted to go into the water or no, stood on one leg, naked, on the top of

the bank holding the other leg in her hand.

The girls, who were still undressing, laughed at her :

"You look like a stork standing up in that way."

Then one of them had lifted her on to her shoulders, and stepped with her down into the water. They held her up where it was deep and let her splash as much as she liked. They all splashed water at each other, and shrieked when hairpins fell out and a girl's hair came tumbling down, dark, wet, and long, like wriggling snakes in the water. They had played about for some time, then lay on the grass to dry themselves near to a field of clover. The air smelt of clover. Afterwards they walked back through fields of tall sunflowers. Beautiful deep brown eyes of the flowers were bent earthwards ; broad leaves moved in the soft wind like arms hidden in full green sleeves. The path led through a large field of maize where also pumpkins grew.

It only stopped where the houses began. There they parted, telling Anna that they would all go to bathe on Thursday, so on Thursday she went to the stream again. The schoolmaster heard of it, and wrote to tell her father.

Anna's punishment had been severe. For three days she had to spend half an hour after school hours writing in a copybook: "It is wrong to disobey," and for three days she was not given pudding at luncheon time. A piece of bread was handed to her instead. On the third day, after having written once very quickly and very badly "It is wrong to obey," she threw down her pen, crept into the kitchen—Maria never asked questions—took up a piece of bread and six lumps of sugar, ran into the courtyard and out by the gate into the road.

Anna had left the village and sat down to rest in the shade of high growing reeds. In a corner of an enormous field of cut wheat a group of men were beating corn

with flails. Carts, drawn by white oxen with high straight horns, were going out of a gate laden with sacks and straw. Three old women moved about slowly, bending with difficulty to pick up any ears of wheat that had not been gathered. The poor were allowed to take these.

When Anna had rested she walked on, as she thought, in the direction of the village of the goose girl. But when the sun had set, and she was not near to any houses, she knew she had lost her way. There was a clump of fruit-trees growing in the middle of a vineyard. She walked towards them, and found under the trees a gurgling spring. She lay flat on the ground, and though night came, and it was dark, she did not feel afraid. She thought: "I can see the stars above me blinking through the leaves. I am glad I can see them; they look like kind eyes. It is very dark near to the ground. Perhaps I had better look upwards all the time. I am not frightened, but who knows if the gnomes will not come down from the

hills, though Kate says they only live up where the mines are. There is no gold here, nor silver ; all the same I wish I knew for certain if there are any gnomes, and if they are good or bad ones. I would like to meet the good gnomes—those who tidy up cottages at night. I would love to go with them when every one is sleeping, open doors quietly, creep in and clean the pots and pans and brush the floors, all by the light of the moon coming through the windows. I shall not think of bad gnomes, I might get frightened, and I must stop here all night. Nothing, nothing will make me go back. I don't want to live with grown-up people ever again. I wish that the gnomes would come. I would be glad to see them. The silence is dreadful, but if a wolf makes a noise what shall I do ? There is a creepy sound under the fallen leaves. Perhaps it is a snake. If it is I shall want to shriek, but I won't—I won't. Some one might hear me."

Here Anna began to feel less brave, and

was glad when her thoughts were interrupted by the sound of voices coming near. A woman was speaking :

" I cannot let you go. My heart will go with you, and my soul. Think of me coming here alone at night, wondering where you are, and mad—mad—knowing that you are kissing another woman."

Anna heard the woman crying. The man tried to comfort her.

" My heart, you know I wouldn't go away if I could help it, but I am forced to go. You wouldn't like it if I could not be a soldier. And then it's not for very long. I will be back soon."

" It is long enough to make you forget me."

" I will never forget you. Your face and your kisses I will always remember. When I come back in my uniform you will be proud of me. We will walk together for every one to see that we love each other."

" But you have loved other girls, Peter. Only last summer every one said it was a scandal that Macha met you in the fields at

night, and now it's me, and in a month it will be some one else. But I love you. I love you."

The girl was still crying. Anna, walking towards them, heard the man say :

" Yes, yes. But then they were all girls of my home. When I am away it will be different. I shall be amongst strangers, and I will think only of the last girl I loved in the place that I love."

Anna went nearer. She saw two shadow-like forms standing close together. The girl's hair was black. Her face was very white. Her head was thrown back as the man held her and kissed her over and over again. Anna knew that she was once more facing that mystery—love. Madness and love. It was always that—and tears, too. Love and tears.

They heard her and started apart. She told them that she was lost. They were kind and sympathetic, and then she told them that she had run away. They were so unhappy that they understood everything. The girl said :

"You can come back with me to my father's house, and if you want to go home in the morning, I will take you back."

After a great deal more kissing and many promises—Anna waited close to them looking out for falling stars, for souls that spanned the skies on their journey to God—she heard them swearing to love each other for ever and always. Then, both in tears, they parted. The girl took Anna's hand, and silently they went away together.

By a long path skirting vineyards they walked on till they came to a rough road in a straggling village. Everything was silent. There was no one in the streets. The girl stopped before a thatched cottage painted with dark bands of colour, and opened a little gate made of palings. Anna could just see that they were in a very untidy yard. A pig moved out of their way grunting, and a cock crew. The girl pushed open the door of the house. They were in a dark room. It smelt stuffy, and was hot. She fumbled about for a moment near to the

stove, then struck a match. It spluttered yellow and green and went out. At last a thin tallow candle was alight, and Anna saw that on the floor, lying on sheepskin coats, three men were sleeping. In a bed near to the stove was a woman and two children. The girl drew Anna towards another bed. In it was room for only one person more ; three children were already sleeping in it. The girl lifted up one of them—the child whimpered and started to cry—put her on a bundle on the ground, where, without another sound, she settled down to sleep again. Anna was put into the empty place in the bed. The girl lay down close to her, and in a moment was asleep.

Anna lay there hot and uncomfortable. She could not even shut her eyes. Everything was strange, but she was not afraid of the girl, nor of the noisily sleeping people. They were Hungarians, not Slovacks nor Jews, so of course she knew they would not hurt a little girl.

She wondered if they were asleep at home.

She wondered what the time was. Night was such a curious thing. Though for children it meant bed and sleep, grown-up people did not seem to be ruled by darkness. It did not strike Anna that at home, not finding her, they would be very much upset. Not being in any danger, she could not understand that they did not know that she was safe.

She longed for her clean bed and the quiet room where she and Irma slept. John still had his cot in his mother's room. Anna thought of him and that John was close to her mother. The thought became unbearable. Tears trickled down her face.

The window was in front of her. She could see a pale moon peering through the stems of tall slim trees. She remembered that Irma always said : " A halo round the moon means a good vintage." She began to think of vintage time, and fell asleep.

At dawn there was a noise at the door. Anna woke to hear her father's voice :

" You have been kind enough to take

care of my little girl. We had a dreadful night hunting for her."

Later on Anna was told that Peter, going to work before dawn, had met a search-party and had told them where to find her.

When her father saw her, he lifted her up and kissed her, and carried her quickly to the carriage. Paul gave her a white and black striped peppermint as he tucked her up in a rug. Her father held her in his arms all the way back, but he did not speak except once when he looked at her very sadly and said :

"Anna, when you are quite a big girl, before you do anything very, very naughty, will you try to think how unhappy it may make the people who love you ? Your mother has cried all night."

Then Anna wished he would scold her, shake her, hit her. She understood what he meant. She had only thought of her own anger, only of herself, never of them nor how they would feel.

The sun was rising but the air was cold.

Clouds floated between the hills; over the plain hung a line of mist. Drooping with heavy dew, the sunflowers bent their heads and showed the green crowns that enclosed their halo of gold. Dewdrops shone on the clusters of tiny green grapes and on the vine leaves.

They passed a round pigeon-tower. Inquisitive little heads popped out of all the holes. A flock of pigeons flew upwards, their wings rose-red with the reflection of dawn. There were other sounds too; they drove past an army of noisy turkeys and a drove of grunting pigs. All this would have delighted Anna at any other time, but though she now saw them, they did not make her heart laugh. She was weighed down by the scolding that she had not had.

The horses went fast, even on the bad roads, but when they got to the high road it was as if they flew. Soon they passed the churchyard and came to the first house in Tállya—a small inn—then rattled over the cobble-stones till they drew up inside

the courtyard. Her mother ran out of the house. She was very pale. Kate and Irma came after her. No one said a cross word. It was terrible.

For a long time, it must have been quite two weeks, Anna was so good that when school broke up, the schoolmaster made a special visit to her father to say that Anna had at last begun to take an interest in her lessons. Even Irma had said :

" Something must have frightened you that night, you imp. You have been like an angel ever since."

But Anna wore her halo lightly, not quite certain that it was a halo. She still knew remorse.

August came with its burning days and the ioy of eating endless watermelons. September brought all the excitement of making jam and preserving fruit. On the little path leading from the kitchen to the garden, in a row of earthenware pots, cucumbers were soaking in yellow vinegar

under the rays of the sun. A load of peaches was laid on a trestle-table in the shade of the lilac bushes. Anna was allowed to help to prepare them for bottling. It was then that she was suddenly seized with the wish to have bottles of her own in which to put cut-up peaches. Two very small bottles were bought for her. When they were filled with peaches, cut into tiny squares, she took them to her perch on the garden wall; she tied string to them, and let them down on to the road. As they had no corks the fruit was soon spilled, but Anna enjoyed the game of pulling them up and down, and went on with it till both the bottles were broken. She did not like to tell anyone that she had broken them so quickly, but she went to sleep that night wishing that she had not broken them. In the morning she still wanted the bottles, but did not like to ask for money to buy them. Her mother, she knew, would say to her: "You break everything you have to play with. You must wait a day or two before

we get you any more bottles." Putting off the fulfilment of her wishes would be called discipline.

Later in the day she asked her mother for two farthings, and gave her the impression that they were to be spent on chocolate. It was annoying for her not to be quite frank, but it was not always possible to be open with grown-up people. They talked a great deal about being patient—a state of mind that Anna could not in the least understand. Safely holding the two farthings in her hand, she went down the road, up a lane to Isaiah's shop. It was the only one where the bottles could be bought. When she came up to it she found it was shut. Anna was upset, but did not give up hope. The side door leading into Isaiah's garden was ajar. She pushed it open and went into the untidy narrow yard filled with overgrown vegetables. The husks of yellow beans fell over the path, and at the end of the garden on the top of a pigsty two large golden pumpkins grew. Anna walked slowly to

the door of the house. It was wide open. Inside on a black horsehair sofa Isaiah lay asleep and snoring. The top of his head was covered with a red handkerchief, but Anna could see his closed eyes, his long white face, and the black curls hanging down on either side of his ears. This was the dragon guarding the treasure, and this dragon had to be passed before the treasure could be hers. The more difficult it became the more she wanted those bottles, and now to her it was no longer merely a difficulty, but a danger. There she stood alone with a Jew, and Jews killed Christian children for their blood. It was true that Isaiah was as nice as anyone could be, and Rachel was pretty and kind, but Isaiah might think it was his duty to kill a child if he found one alone in his house. Anna's legs began to shake. She felt sick and afraid to move. She saw only that she was alone with a man who might feel bound to kill her, and even if he did it kindly and as a sacrifice, still it would be very terrible for her.

Inside the room a black cat jumped down from a shelf. It made a slight noise. Isaiah opened his eyes and sat up, quickly looking at Anna.

"This is a surprise. Have you come to see my Rachel? Come in."

Anna's first idea on seeing Isaiah move was to run, but he looked so friendly that she was reassured; and she wanted the bottles badly. She told him why she had come.

"But it is the Sabbath. You know that I cannot sell anything to-day."

Anna slipped into the room. Through an open door she saw the shop. The shutters of the windows were closed. It looked like a black hole.

"I only want those two bottles—nothing else, and they are very small."

"It is not the size of the thing that counts. To sell is a sin whether the object sold is big or little."

"Perhaps it would only be a little sin as the bottles are very, very tiny. I can't wait till to-morrow. I want them to-day."

Isaiah walked towards the shop.

"Well, perhaps for this once. But it is against my principles."

Anna followed him inside the shop. It was less dark. A side window was shutterless, and through the tinpots, bottles, handkerchiefs, and wooden spoons hung up in it grey light filtered through. Isaiah hunted about on the shelves till he found a box. When he put it on the counter it made a rattling sound. Anna knew it was the one in which the little bottles were kept. Before giving them to her, Isaiah said he wanted to dust them, and both he and Anna went back together into the room. After rubbing the bottles with his red handkerchief, Isaiah opened a drawer and took out a piece of paper, wrapped them up and gave them to Anna.

The two farthings had become hot in her small closed hand. As she handed them to Isaiah they stuck together. He held them on the palm of his hand and looked at them. When he took one away

from the other it was as if he did so with an effort.

"Being the day it is, I will only charge you half," and he gave one of the farthings back to Anna.

At that moment the door opened and Rachel came in radiant in a pink cotton wrapper. She, too, was surprised to see Anna, and laughed when she heard the reason of her visit.

Isaiah went back to the sofa to prepare to go to sleep again. Rachel walked with Anna to the gate. She did not look out when she said good-bye, as it was early in the afternoon, and she had not yet brushed her hair.

Outside close to the wall sat three men. One had rough matting in front of him. On it were placed tobacco leaves. Another was selling dried peas, beans, and lentils from small sacks arranged neatly in rows on the ground. Anna walked up to the third. He sat cross-legged on an old coat. He was selling popped corn from two large sacks.

Anna handed him the other farthing. The man, with a wooden measure, ladled corn into a pocket she made by holding up her dress. Slowly she walked home eating the corn as she went.

A WEEK before the vintage—near Tállya it was not till after the middle of October—Anna went for a long drive with her parents. Her father had heard that about ten miles away the vines had been destroyed by phylloxera, and he wished to go himself to examine the plants there.

On either side of the road were vineyards. Anna saw her father was looking anxiously at them as they passed. They had gone a long way when suddenly he called out :

" Paul, stop !"

The horses were pulled up sharply. Paul was gloomy and looked worried. Anna's mother did not speak at all. They had all been abstracted and quiet. Her father clambered up a bank and stood for a few minutes examining one of the vines growing close to its oak spike. When he came back

his face was quite white. His voice sounded as if it could not quite easily pass his throat.

"It has come as far as this already. God knows how soon it will get to Tállya. It will mean ruin to us, to all the country-side."

Anna's mother put her hand on his.

"It will indeed be terrible for us, but Michael, the poor, the poor people. What will it mean to them?"

Paul was listening.

"We shall all have to emigrate. There will be nothing here for us to eat."

"Ah, Paul," Anna's mother said to him, "You are young, but the old people they cannot emigrate. They will have no bread."

They turned round to drive homewards. No one spoke. Anna was afraid to break the silence. She sat between her father and mother, conscious of a terrible calamity; she felt, without understanding it, the distress of her parents, and wondered what it could mean when her father said it meant ruin for the whole country.

He spoke again :

" It is like a terrible plague that creeps unseen close to your feet, and suddenly you find that all you have built up and guarded is lost in a night. We are all helpless. I doubt whether anyone here can afford to plant anew with American vines."

Again there was a silence that lasted till they were home once more, when her mother said to Anna :

" We are all very much upset. You must be good and quiet. If the phylloxera comes to these vineyards it will mean ruin for the poor, and for us too."

" Just like a fire ? "

" Yes just the same. No—worse—much worse."

And then Anna knew how great their fear must be. From her babyhood she had seen the desolation and misery caused by a fire, and this thing, if it came, was to be worse than that.

But in another week, when they had begun to gather the grapes, everybody was as

cheerful as if nothing had ever frightened them; and as the vintage was a good one, people began to say:

"Well, perhaps after all it will not come here, and in any case, surely it cannot come at once. There is no sign of it now."

The Sunday afternoon before the grapes were picked, Anna walked with Kate to the churchyard to take flowers to the dead baby. The grave had no stone. A very small wooden cross marked it. Kate hung a wreath on the cross, then knelt down and kissed the mound of grass that covered the grave. She cried all the time and kept on drying her eyes with her skirt. Whenever Anna went with her to the baby's grave she saw that Kate cried just as much as if the baby had only died the day before. Anna was very sorry for her, but she had almost forgotten the baby.

Close to the churchyard under a circle of trees, girls and young men met on Sunday afternoons. They sat in groups and talked. Anna heard the sound of their laughter and

waited till she thought Kate was calm, then said :

" Shall we go near these people ? They may dance. The gipsies are beginning to play."

" Wait a minute," Kate begged. " I don't want them to see me with my eyes all red."

Anna and Kate sat down on the ground—the little grave between them. The gipsies had moved nearer. They were not playing music for dancing, but a song that they all knew. Presently there was a murmur. They were humming a tune, and with a burst of sound as the gipsies played it again, every one sang it loudly and passionately :

I want not your gifts—but your kisses—
your kisses !
No ring for my finger, but your heart on
my heart.

Anna sang it too. Kate was silent. Her eyes were far away. The gipsies stopped playing. She turned to Anna :

"Shall we go there now?"

"No, let's stop here. We can hear the music if they play again, and I don't want to see anyone now, not even if they dance."

Kate trimmed the grass on the grave, pulling it away gently with her fingers. Anna looked as if troubled with a serious thought.

"Kate, why am I always so naughty?"

"I don't think you are naughty. You are high-spirited—that's all."

"Yes, Kate, I am naughty. Even mother says so."

"Well, sometimes, my precious, not often, after all, grown-up people are sometimes naughty too."

"Yes, but they have only God to punish them, and He is very far away. I am punished nearly every day."

"Well, if you are naughty, I am sure you don't mean to be."

"Yes, I do. Only I don't mean to be naughty as much as they say I am. Sometimes I mean to be naughty if Irma makes

me cross. She is always saying I mustn't do this or that because it brings bad luck, or my leg will grow crooked, or something else as bad. And it isn't always true. She told me a long time ago that if one child jumps over another, the one that is jumped over will never grow. I tried to see if it was true. When she was out of the room, I put John on the floor, I jumped over him three times to be quite certain. Only yesterday she said to Martha, the new housemaid, 'How very much John has grown lately,' and I did that weeks ago. But often they say I am naughty and I don't know why. Yesterday father said that I had been so bad that he thought he would not let me have a holiday for the vintage."

"Then you must have been really naughty. What did you do?"

"It was like this. Mother took me with her to see the old doctor. They talked for a long time about Panna—Peter Dio's daughter—the one who went away last year and has just come back very ill. Peter

won't have her in the house. He says she is a bad girl. I know, because Martha told Irma all about it when she came in to sweep the nursery. Mother didn't know I knew, and she and the old doctor only talked about where Panna could be put to be taken care of."

"Well, God has punished her, poor thing. You see grown-up people do get punished, too. But what happened at the doctor's house?"

"They talked too much. I got tired, and when Father Gabriel came in, I asked if I could go and play in the garden. They said 'Yes,' and I went. It was dull in the garden. There was nothing to play with. I threw stones into a hole high up in a wall and got very hot, so I stopped. At the end of the house was a water-butt; the water in it looked clear—a lovely brown. I took off all my clothes and climbed into it. There was a large square stone near, so it was easy. I clung to the sides. The water was very cold, and when I found that my feet didn't

touch anything but water, I thought I should be drowned, and started to shout, and shouted and screamed till the young doctor—the one who does the old doctor's work—Father Gabriel, mother and a servant, all came rushing out of the house. The young doctor took me out. Mother wrapped me in her coat and ran with me into the house. When she saw I was not hurt, she laughed. They gave me something good and warm to drink, and I quite enjoyed myself. Mother would not have told father, but the young doctor met him in the street and told him, so she had to tell him too. He was angry. He said I might have been drowned, and as I wasn't, he punished me. Now I did not think going into a water-butt was naughty. No one had ever told me not to."

Kate was laughing.

"But other little girls would know that they mustn't take off their clothes in the garden. Are you going to have the holiday all the same?"

"Yes. Yes. I am. Father at first said

no, but mother said that the punishment would be too great for me, so I can go."

From dawn the pickers had been busy. They hoped to be able to carry home the last load before nightfall. The last grapes to be gathered—those for the best wine—grew in a vineyard on the right above the road to Szántó. The sun beat on it all day, and Anna and her friend Maria, tired out, had gone to rest at the edge of the dingle under the scanty shade of fruit trees.

They watched the carts taking away in large flat vats the grapes that the pickers had tumbled out of the wooden buckets on their shoulders. In a flat space under a circle of oak trees, stakes had been driven into the ground, and hanging between them, hammock-wise, were large shawls into which babies were put whilst their mothers worked. An old woman stopped near to see that no harm came to the little bundles. She also looked after a cauldron of water and when more wood was needed, threw some on to the fire under it.

There was incessant movement, sounds of talking, laughter, shouting of the drivers as the horses trotted up the sharp incline to the flat space under the trees. Every now and then a woman came back to take a crying bundle out of the swinging shawl, and sat down to feed her child, at the same time eating her own food—bread soaked in bacon fat.

At midday there were many people sitting round the fire burning under the cauldron. Bacon and meat were thrust through a stake of wood and turned slowly round and round till they were cooked. When later on Kate joined them, she, Maria and Anna sat down together to prepare their food in this way. But Kate took great care that Anna dropped the fat on to the piece of bread held under her portion of bacon, and not on to the fire nor her feet nor her clothes.

They had finished eating when Paul drove back again with an empty cart. He asked Kate for food. She quickly prepared it for him, and then got up asking the children if

they would care to go on picking with her. As Kate stood up Paul caught hold of her skirt.

"Don't go yet. You might give me palinka or a drink of water."

Kate pulled her skirt away.

"Get it yourself." Then, with a sneer, she looked him full in the face.

"You men, you can't do a day of decent work without letting your minds go wandering after every woman you meet."

Anna saw that Paul looked angry. She wondered if he would become mad, and whether he would do any terrible thing, but Kate caught hold of her hand and pulled her away. She had to walk fast to keep up with her, and did not see Paul again till later.

In the afternoon Maria told Anna that she must go home. They waited till Paul came back, and when the vats on his cart were filled once more, Maria clambered up. Anna suddenly decided to go back with her and to return later. The two children held on to the sides of the vats. They found it more

comfortable to stand. The road was rough and the grape juice kept on jerking out. Paul was driving in a very strange way—the reins were quite loose in his hands. Soon he dropped them altogether. Maria, seeing this, looked wisely at Anna.

"He is drunk."

At that moment Paul fell backwards from the narrow plank on which he had been sitting, and lay huddled up on the floor of the cart. Anna pushed past him, and caught hold of the reins just as they were going to fall to the ground. Maria came after her. They sat side by side, Maria holding her arms round Anna's waist to stop her being dragged away from her seat by the pulling horses.

All Anna knew of driving was that when she wanted the horses to go to the right she pulled the right rein, but fortunately there was no particular reason to keep to what was called the road. The sunburnt grass on either side of the track was a good deal smoother to go on. But there was a bridge

—a simple affair made by throwing tree-trunks across a stream—and that had to be crossed. Stones marked the corners of the bridge. A wheel of the cart caught one of these, and for a second it was doubtful whether the right back wheel would land on earth or in the water. Anna held her breath. There was a great splashing from the vats. They were safe on the other side. Paul was covered with grapes and grape-juice. He swore a long oath and then was quiet again.

Maria was the eldest of six children. Her wisdom had been hard earned.

"If your father sees Paul drunk he will send him away. That will be bad for him."

Anna knew this was a serious moment for Paul.

"What shall I do?"

"Let's push him into the next stream. We can say he had an accident."

The next stream was shallow and wide. It had no bridge. In the widest part and where they crossed it a flock of geese were drinking. Anna pulled hard at the reins.

The horses stopped in the middle of the stream amongst the geese. She and Maria pushed at the inert figure of Paul. He seemed sound asleep, and did not even murmur a protest. He was heavy, but at last they had got him to the edge of the cart, and with a great effort rolled him over into the water. There was a splash. The geese, alarmed, raised their wings and ran away with their yellow beaks in the air, hissing in anger and fright. The horses, startled, cantered till they came to the inn with the bowling green. Here they stopped.

Maria got down. It was near her home. Anna was driven back the little distance to her house by John, the inn-keeper's son. He had rushed out of the house directly the horses had stopped at the door.

When they arrived at the yard and in front of the barn where the grapes were trodden, there was much surprise at seeing the cart without Paul. Anna told her father that Paul had had an accident. Her father was very busy ; he only asked :

"Is Paul hurt?" and when Anna said "No," he moved away to speak to a man who was waiting to see him.

One of the workmen lifted Anna on to a barrel. It was upside down. She sat on it and watched the broad low vats in which the men, with their white linen trousers rolled up to their thighs and twisted in at the waist, were treading the grapes with their bare feet. The vats were filled all the time with grapes from the carts that drove up. The juice from the pressed-out fruit ran through pipes into other vats in the cellar below.

In the second cart that came up, drawn by huge white oxen, Paul sat, looking very sheepish and almost sober. He asked one of the men a question and was evidently reassured by his answer, as he walked up to Anna and without saying a word he bowed to her and kissed her hand. Anna, seated on the high barrel, felt like a king receiving homage. But her father very soon came back and told her to jump down.

"Go to your mother. We are too busy

here. She is going back to the vineyards and you can go too."

Anna, back again under the trees, sat on the grass close to her mother. She was busy choosing the largest bunches of grapes out of a bucket that Kate had put near to her, whilst her mother made a wreath of grapes, a huge wreath to be carried in front of the last load that was taken home. When it was finished, they hung it on to a pole with cords. It looked beautiful, a mass of pale green and deep purple grapes and autumn brown grape-leaves tied with the Hungarian colours.

The sun was setting when the gipsies came. They began to play a csárdás. Though they must have been tired after the hard work of many days, six girls and six men started to dance. They had just come to the part where the dance ends in a mad whirl, when the music stopped suddenly—the band had got orders to start. The twelve dancers finished the dance to the

sound of their own singing. The carts drove away. The pickers, the dancers, and those who had sat on the ground to rest, followed the wreath-laden pole. They all walked slowly—it had been a long day—singing as they went. The gipsies started with a lively tune, but little by little as the sun sank lower and lower it became almost a dirge. Those who followed them sang songs that were full of the sorrow of the land. It was in their blood to march at evenings across a darkening plain towards their fires and their homes. The dead sang through them of marches that were heavy with loss, of days that had ended in pain.

When they came to the first house, as if shaking off sorrows remembered, with one accord they burst into a wild and joyous song. Anna, following with her mother and Kate, was glad. She had watched the sun dip over the plain and had felt the sadness of their singing, the weariness of their tired limbs. It was as if with the setting sun laughter died from the world. As the happy

song started, joy came in her heart once more. "The sun goes away and hides," she thought. "It hides its face in the thick grass of the distant plains. It is dark. But to-morrow from behind the hill a new sun will arise. To-morrow there will be sunshine."

PANNA, the daughter of Peter Dios the carpenter, was dead. When she had knocked at her father's door, she had said that though she had gone away to see the man she loved because he was ill, she had not lived with him as her father had thought—he had died on the day of her arrival. She had not returned, nor had she written ; she had been afraid of her father's anger. Peter was a man of violent temper. Weeping, she told them she had worked in the fields of the Calvinist minister at Miskolcz. She had become ill, too ill to work any more. He had given her money for her journey, and told her to go home to her own people. When her father refused to let her into his house, Father Gabriel had made her share the room of his old housekeeper. He believed in Panna's story and wanted her father to believe it too. He went to Miskolcz to

see the Calvinist minister and brought a letter from him to Panna's father. But Panna was dead before they came to take her home. The night she died, they carried her to her father's house. He was distraught with grief, and ran about the streets crying to each person he met:

"I have killed my girl Panna," and as Panna had not been bad, they gave her the funeral of a maid.

Elsa sent from Balog a basket of white chrysanthemums, and Anna's mother made them into a wreath. Anna was not at school. There had been cases of chicken-pox among the children, and the school was shut up for some weeks. Because of this, Anna was able to go with Kate when she took the wreath to Peter's house. It was the day of the funeral. The yard was filled with women all talking in hushed voices. Anna and Kate pushed open the door of the house. They found the room crowded with people who were to follow the body to the grave. On the table was the coffin; candles burnt on

either side of it. As they pushed through the crowd, Panna's mother, seeing them, came forward. Sobbing all the time, she lifted Anna up and asked her to lay the wreath on to the coffin. Anna did as she was told, and then—shy of the number of people present, rushed back to Kate and caught hold of her arm. Kate, knowing the child's dislike of being near too many people close together, took her out of the house into the street. They sat down on a bench. Elizabeth, and a big bony young woman with a red face carrying a tightly swaddled baby, also came out and sat down by them.

"Surely it was a shame to turn her away," said Elizabeth. "Peter is a hard man, but he is suffering now more than the girl suffers; she is away from tears and pain."

The woman who was feeding the child turned to Elizabeth.

"Yes, perhaps it is better for her, but she looked very sweet and young lying there with a smile on her face and her hands crossed on her breasts. It was sad to see her

wear her white marriage dress for death, and sad that she should miss her years of living."

"You feel like that Martha, because you are only at the beginning of its trials. I am old—I know. The bitter is more bitter than the sweet is sweet, and as the years creep on sorrows gather round us till there is no seeing beyond them at joy or hope. To live is to be unhappy and to suffer."

Anna looked up at Elizabeth's tired old face.

"But Elizabeth I love to live. I don't want to be dead like Panna. I don't mean to suffer or to be unhappy. Martha too is happy. Look, she is smiling."

They did not answer her. Kate spoke suddenly, almost as if she were angry.

"It is not with age that suffering comes. We who are young feel pain more than the old can feel it. We suffer with all our strength. The old have less passion in their despair. We know all the pain of living—love and jealousy too. The old forget these things."

Elizabeth smiled gently. "They know remorse and regret."

Martha laughed. "Well, I would rather suffer anything than the torture I feel when I think that my Mark is kissing a girl in the fields."

Kate answered her. "That is bad enough, but there are worse things still. There is separation from those we love."

Elizabeth stood up and patted Kate on the head.

"You are a good girl Kate, and life is hard for you."

Kate looked down on the ground.

"It is hard for all of us who are young, made of flesh and blood, and not crippled in our desires."

Elizabeth shook her head silently. Martha looked surprised. She got up and started to walk away.

"Kate, you say anything that comes into your head. Seeing all that has happened, you should not be so free in your speech."

Anna, who had heard everything, but had

only vaguely understood what they were saying, felt that there was an unkind note in Martha's voice as she spoke of Kate. Her instinct was at once to defend her friend. She shouted after Martha :

" Don't speak like that to Kate. She is very clever, mother says so. You can't understand the things that come into her head."

Martha stopped for a moment.

" I'm sure I meant no harm. Kate is spoilt by the gentlefolk, and has strange ideas."

Clouds covered the sun. The air became colder. With a sharp stone Anna drew a square on the ground and played hop-scotch to keep herself warm. She was hopping backwards and forwards on one leg, when she heard Elizabeth say to Kate :

" Be patient for a little while longer. You will find happiness again. Don't fret away your youth in vain longing."

" Vain longing ! Why, if I thought it was all hopeless, I should kill myself as I stand here before you."

She sat down again and took the handkerchief off her head, smoothed it on her knees, then putting it on her head again tied it with quick fingers.

She spoke again, but quietly, in dull, level tones.

"Do you think that I am stone?—that I have forgotten everything? There is not a night that I don't creep into the cowshed and live over again the time when he first kissed me. I put the lantern in the trough; the light shines on the beams above, and in the gloom below I see the animals with their great eyes turned towards me, wondering why I disturb their rest. I stand by the old black cow and watch the door. I want to see it open, I want to see him coming in just as he did that night when he put his hands on my neck and drew me to him. There is the sweet clean smell of the kine, the sound of their chewing the cud; but the door keeps shut and I feel alone, so terribly alone. I put my head on the old cow's head and cry."

Elizabeth was distressed.

"Kate, Kate, don't think of him any more. Even if he did not kill his wife, he was a sinful man—he wished her dead in his heart. Who knows if he will ever come back?"

"He promised me; he promised me."

"I have known many promises broken."

"But I know he will come back. I know it. I am only in despair because the time is so long."

The gate of the garden opened. Anna ran to Elizabeth.

"The people are coming."

The three moved further away and waited.

First came a youth holding an unsheathed sword in his hand. Directly after him walked four young men carrying the coffin on their shoulders. When they started to go down the street, four girls in white with lighted candles in their hands walked on either side of the coffin. They all went slowly, followed by the relations and friends of the dead girl.

Anna wished to go with them, but Kate said she had work to do. She suggested to Anna that it would be better to see the flowers on the grave later when all the people would have left the churchyard. Anna thought this was a good idea, and walked home quietly with Kate.

After the midday meal she played in the garden with John. When she thought she had waited long enough, she went towards the gate telling Irma, who did not want her to leave the garden, that she was going to see Julia Kálmány. The only way she could soothe her conscience in telling this lie was by thinking that at least she would pass Aunt Julia's house on her way to the grave.

In spite of the fact that every house had its garden, the distances in Tállya were not great. Passing through the street of the shops, turning to the right down a narrow lane, then to the left by a path through a field, Anna made a short cut to the churchyard. She soon found the new grave—a spot of brown earth in the midst of much

long grass. Flowers had been carefully put round to mark the shape of the grave, and at the head of it was the wreath from Anna's mother.

Through the bars of iron enclosing a grave next to the new one, a rose bush had pushed itself as if escaping from a prison. It was all leaves and thorns, the roses were dead. Near by, an ash tree in growing had raised the stone of a tomb. A small bird hopped about in its branches ; it sang, flew away, then came back and sang once more. In spite of its singing all was desolate and sad. Anna could not believe that Panna was really there hidden away. She thought that the bird must be the girl she had known—the bird that was singing because it was free.

Not far off was the little chapel. On All Souls night Anna had seen it open. Father Gabriel had had a service there. It had been lighted up, but as there was not enough room for more than a few people in it, the rest had knelt outside in the faint glow of

the candle-lighted graves. There the living had prayed for the souls of the dead. Anna remembered that a week before an All Souls night, kneeling by her mother as she prayed, she had wondered if the dead prayed too, prayed that the living might be less unhappy. There were so many near her crying bitterly.

Above the door on the outside of the chapel was a picture of the Day of Judgment—lost souls falling into the stretching flames of hell. At the back on the other side of the chapel, above a false door matching the real door in front, was the picture of the saved flying upwards into Paradise.

While she was looking at the picture of the happy souls, Anna heard the slow sound of a pick. She walked on the path between nameless grass-covered mounds till she was quite close to the sound. Next a grave surrounded by wood palings painted black she found Thomas the grave-digger. He stopped working when he saw Anna, clambered out of the hole in which he was

digging, took out a pipe from his pocket and lit it. He seemed to be worried and spoke as if he were glad to have some one to talk to.

"Old Grandmother Kovács died yesterday. Her son came down to tell me to dig her grave. She wanted to be buried with her husband—dead these twenty years. Now her son says this is his father's grave, though how anyone is to know with all the place going to pieces, hardly any names left and no numbers at all, I don't know. I say it is the one over there by the cross. I started digging there yesterday, and didn't sleep a wink all night, feeling sure that it is the wrong grave."

He took up a skull from a heap of earth and held it in his hands.

"This is never the head of Martin Kovács. There isn't a sound tooth in this skull—his were as good the day he was buried as yours are."

Anna had never seen a skull. She was torn between fear and curiosity. Curiosity,

however, held her. She looked at the skull quite close. It was deep brown; the eyes, nose, and mouth were filled with earth.

Thomas kicked at the ground with his foot.

"And look at all these bones! There have been half a dozen already buried here." He lifted a bone.

"And whose thigh is this! It's never Martin's leg. He was a small man, uncommonly small."

Anna sat down on the grass a little further away from where she had been standing.

"How do you know it's a leg? It looks like an arm."

"That's easy enough to know. We learn more than that here. Strange things, too, come to light, after being hidden many years."

Anna crept closer, near to the edge of the hole. She looked down.

"Are you afraid of ghosts, Tom, when you dig down there? Do you think they will pull you right into the earth? Paul

says the dead have long arms, long enough to reach all their enemies."

"Don't you listen to Paul. He knows more about the arms of the living than about those of the dead. Once they are down there," he pointed to the ground, "they won't come to disturb you nor me. Now don't you go and fall into that hole. I am off to see his Reverence again about this grave. It's a shame to disturb a lot of sleeping folk."

Thomas's legs were stiff from rheumatism. He walked very slowly. Anna watched him down the path that led to the high road. By the two very long mounds that the children called the "dead giants' tombs" he went out of sight.

Anna was alone. The sun had not again come out. The sky was filled with heavy black clouds. In the mountains far away the first veil of snow must have already fallen. A wind sprang up. It lifted the dry leaves out of the grass and swirled them along the path. On the high black cross of

wood a child's white shirt flapped in the wind. A gipsy mother had hung it there, hoping that by the magic of the cross her dying child might live. Anna stood up, looking once again into the open grave. Another skull lay at the bottom of it with its empty eye-sockets turned upwards. She crept away, too fearful to run, picking her way between the rough unhewn stones that marked the graves of the gipsies.

AFTER a long winter, bitterly cold, gloomy, and often wet, came a hot spring and drought. The harvest threatened to be a bad one, and the vines were not doing well. There was much poverty and sorrow.

One day in the garden, Anna's father told her that the phylloxera was coming nearer and more quickly than they had expected, and that probably he too and her mother and John would have to leave Tállya. He said that for many reasons they were thinking of sending her to school in England quite soon. He spoke very quietly and gently to her.

"You will not feel lonely and strange away from us if you can think that perhaps soon we shall all join you."

Anna felt cold all over, just as when she had first heard that she would be sent away, but she did not speak. Her father looked down at her; she was sitting on the grass.

Every line of the little figure was pathetic and dejected. He realized what was in her mind.

"We can all come back here again one day. We all love Tállya. There is no place in the world like it."

Anna glanced up eagerly.

"Are you sure that we can come back?"

He smiled.

"Come here and sit on my knee."

Anna jumped up, climbed up to his chair, and put both her arms round his neck. She bit her lips trying not to cry.

Her father put his hands on her head and smoothed her hair softly.

"I cannot promise you for certain that we shall come back to live here, but when you are bigger and you still love Tállya just as much, we can come together and see it once more, and see all the people you love. You can keep Tállya in your little heart as your great love. It is good for all of us to care for some place with all our heart and soul. The hills do not change, nor the plains; it is

peace in the worst hours of life to have their memory in their hearts."

For a long time Anna sat on his knees. As he had a book of Arany's poems in his pocket, he took it out and read to her from it.

Later, when they went into the house again, she felt quieter, and could even think of her departure with curiosity and expectation. That night when she said her prayers her mother hung round her neck a little gold chain; there was a medallion of the Virgin hanging to it.

"Won't father mind?" asked Anna.

"No, not now. I want you to have it so very, very much. You must always wear it, and you must think of me when you hold it in your hand."

Then Anna cried as much and as hopelessly as when John was born.

In the middle of the night Anna was awakened by the sound of people talking loudly and running about. When by the light of a candle she saw Irma standing close to her bed, she was not surprised. She knew

a dreadful thing had happened. Some calamity might naturally follow the heavy sorrow of the afternoon.

Irma held Anna's clothes in her hands. John had already been dressed, and sat on the floor playing with a toy cart.

"Get up quick, quick. There is a great fire and the wind is blowing this way." As she spoke, Irma pulled on Anna's stockings. Then she put a thick coat over her night-dress.

Kate came in and said to Irma:

"My lady says go at once to the house of the Lutheran pastor. She will join you there later. I will look after Anna. My cottage is so small that they have been able to wet through the whole of the thatch. It's safer than this place. There are six men working on the roof here, but the wood is dry, and they are afraid of the sparks."

Anna kissed John as he and Irma with Martha started to go out together. Irma complained all the time. Anna heard her saying as she went through the door:

"Nice place this Tállya! When there isn't the terror of fire you are flooded out, and when you are not frozen by the icy winds, you are baked by the sun."

In the highest part of the garden, Kate and Anna stopped. They looked back at the sky behind them; it was a dull red. Every now and then tongues of flame flashed upwards, and a shower of golden sparks were let loose as toys for the wind. It scattered them here and there, but steadily in one direction, towards the place where Anna and Kate were standing. Against the fitful, angry light they saw the dark figures of men moving about on the roof, handing buckets of water to each other. From the distance came faint sounds of people shouting, and suddenly when a wavering flame shot up from a new place in the sky, the church bell began to ring again the terrifying call of fire; all other sounds were lost in that dreadful clanging, in the warning voice from the skies.

Anna listened for a few moments, then

begged Kate to take her away. They ran till they came to the gate going out of the field; there they met Elizabeth, who was going towards the house to see if the children were safe. She went with them into Kate's cottage, and as it was impossible for anyone to go to sleep till the fire had been stopped from spreading, she sat down to wait to see what would happen.

All three drank milk and ate brown bread. Kate, carrying her portion of bread in her hands, went through the door saying:

"I have to go and call John and Mark to send them to the cowsheds."

Elizabeth sat down on a low chair. Anna crept on to her knees, put her head on her shoulder, but though tired and heavy-eyed, she was not able to sleep. In front of them the small window, unshuttered, framed night and the stars.

"Elizabeth, are there more stars in Tállya than anywhere else in the world?"

"I think, my angel, the stars must be the same everywhere."

"There cannot be more anywhere else, they fill all the sky here."

As they were watching the window, a shower of sparks flew past.

Anna got up quickly :

"The stars are coming down."

"Those were not stars, my lamb. They are not pale and far away. Each one of those firesparks might bring desolation into a whole village."

They heard noises above them of a man hastily climbing a ladder ; the moment after water was falling down between the stars and them. Later on the latch moved ; the man put his head in at the door.

"Don't be frightened. The wind is changing. We are going off to look after the houses on the east side now. This last outburst of fireworks was from the small rick in the field. We had forgotten all about it, and the first spark that went near to it set it on fire."

When the man went away he left the door open. Elizabeth did not shut it. They

sat there silently listening to the croaking of the frogs. Twice the sounds of their rhythmic wailing was hidden in a shout. Once a church bell far away rang the alarm for fire.

Elizabeth put up her finger.

"Hush, that is the bell at Balog. I suppose they are going to send men over to help."

"I'm glad it isn't our bell ringing again. When I heard it out there in the red light and the flames shot up, I thought of that picture on the chapel in the graveyard. I was afraid that it might be the last day of all, though I thought it couldn't be that really, because nobody in Tállya would have to go down to where those flames are burning for ever."

Elizabeth tried to persuade Anna to lie on the bed and try to go to sleep, but she clung to Elizabeth's neck and refused to move.

"No, no. I can't sleep, I cannot. Tell me a story."

Elizabeth saw it was useless to hope that Anna would lie down before Kate returned.

"What story shall I tell you?"

"I want the story you told Kate one day when you found her crying as she was making bread."

"But that is a sad tale. We want now something to cheer us up."

"I want that one, please."

Kate had put a lighted lantern into a corner. The room was almost dark. Before beginning her story Elizabeth took up the lantern and put it on top of the oven. The wooden door of the lantern threw a deep shadow in the shape of a cross on the white wall behind the old woman and the child on her knee.

Elizabeth began:

"Long, long years ago, near to the time when Christ had made holy the earth by the tread of His gentle feet, in a village on the plain lived a young woman. Her name was Esther, and her husband—he was young too—was called Michael. They cared for each other very much, and when a baby came to them they loved him too.

Their child was only just able to walk when Michael was called away to the war. Two days after he had gone, the baby became ill and died. Esther cried and cried, but no one was able to comfort her. They spoke to her kindly and tried to make her think of other things than her grief, but it was all useless. The priest said to her, 'Your uncontrolled grief is wrong. Do you never think that your child is with God?'

"Esther shook her head and sobbed even more than before, and though the priest knelt down and prayed, she was not able to pray with him. She never prayed at all.

"Late one night when she had drawn the heavy wooden bolt of her door, instead of going to bed she raged about the room wringing her hands and saying aloud:

"'It is cruel, it is cruel. I cannot bear it. I cannot—cannot live.'

"As she passed near to the window she saw outside, standing close to it, a tall gaunt figure shrouded in misty grey. The face

was hidden, but she saw a long bony hand that clutched together the garments that it wore. Esther stood still and without curiosity or interest waited to see what he would do.

"The figure moved slowly, as smoke moves heavily in a closed room. There was a knock at her door. She did not answer nor did she step away from the window.

"Another knock—then without waiting a moment the bolt inside slipped itself—the door opened and the tall figure stood before her motionless, near to the door:

"Esther asked quietly:

"'Whom do you seek!'

"When he answered, his voice was clear and soft. He did not show his face.

"'I seek an unhappy mother.'

"'Surely I am she you wish to see, but who are you?'

"'I am God's Angel of Death.'

"'You have come to take me to my child?'

"'Yes. God too has the heart of a mother;

He has felt your tears, He has heard your lamentations, and rather than that your days should be wasted in bitterness and weeping, He has told me to take you into the garden of His children who have slept.'

"He put out his hand. Esther went quickly towards him and put her hand in his. For a moment everything was dark in her mind. When the darkness cleared, she was in a beautiful garden where every kind of flower grew. Above the garden a clear light radiated, such as the light of the sun at mid-day in midsummer.

"Esther, dazed, followed Death through the many paths of the garden. Wondering, she noticed that though most of the flowers were growing well and were beautiful in colour and form, there were others that drooped; their leaves were yellow as the leaves of plants in autumn.

"Esther was anxious to know the reason of this.

"'Why do you not throw away the flowers that are nearly dead? They spoil the garden.

There are many flowers beautiful to look at; you could easily spare those that are fading.'

"Death turned round, and for the first time Esther saw his face. It was terrible to her who was alive, but still she was not afraid. Despair empties the soul of every other feeling. His voice was less gentle as he said to her:

"'Those flowers grow as grow the souls of those that have left the world you live in. Those that are sad to look upon have their roots watered and hurt by the tears shed for them. There are men who, having no faith in God's mercy, shed tears always, and the souls they weep are not able to joy in the peace of Paradise.' Death pointed to a row of strong-growing lilies. 'These are the flowers of children who are loved and are trusted to God's keeping. And now I will show you the flower of your child.'

"He led her down another path; then stopped in front of a small plant. One flower with hanging head grew amongst its

yellowing leaves. It looked less worthy of the beautiful garden than any of the flowers near. Death touched it with his finger.

" ' This is what you are doing to the soul of your child.'

" In a flash Esther saw her selfishness. She knelt down by the little plant, and, bending her head low to the ground, whispered :

" ' God guard you in His heart, my child, my little one.' And there were no more tears in her eyes.

" Death took her again by the hand. She saw that his face was once more hidden. All was dark till she found herself kneeling in front of the crucifix hanging by the side of the bed in her room."

As Elizabeth stopped speaking, Anna's head fell heavily on her shoulder. The child had gone to sleep. Kate came in and whispered hurriedly to Elizabeth :

" The wind has quite changed round, we can go to sleep safely now. I have been a long time away, as I found that my lady had gone to Martin Horváth's house. It was

on fire. Martin's wife has been ill all the summer. He was away and she was alone. She started hysterics as soon as the rick in their yard caught fire, and shut herself up in the kitchen with her four small children. They were screaming in the smoke-filled room. I found my lady helping to get them out. The wooden posts of the door were already burning. I saw her standing between them with the youngest Horváth child in her arms. She was framed in fire and smoke, yet walked out of the house as if nothing unusual were happening. Afterwards she fainted, and I had to take her to the house of the Lutheran pastor, where Irma could look after her. It was not safe for her to come back to the house ; the master did not wish it. The roof of the left wing had caught fire, and though they have quickly got it under, he thought it safer to wait till the morning."

Kate had slept on a mattress laid on the floor. When she woke the sun was already

shining. There was a loud knock at the door.

Anna sat up.

"Who is knocking? The noise woke me."

"I cannot think who it can be. It is early still."

There was another and a louder knock. Kate ran to the door and unbolted it. As it was thrown wide open Anna saw a man bending his head ready to pass under the lintel. On his shoulder he carried a stick with a white bundle tied to it. He threw the stick and bundle on to the floor and put out his arms. Kate called out "Andrew, Andrew!" and fell against the man. He caught hold of her by the arms and held her away from him to look at her.

"Yes, I have come. They let me go before my time was up. I did not expect it. I walked all the way from Munkács saying: 'Kate, Kate' at every step of the road."

It seemed to Anna that for a long time after neither of them spoke. They kissed

each other as if they were thirsty and were drinking. Kate, with a quick movement, wrenched herself away from him and went to the dark corner of the room. She came forward again carrying the empty cradle in her arms and put it on the ground in front of the man. For a second he stood still looking down at it, then he knelt on the mud floor and put his arms right round it, and buried his head in the little pillow.

Kate did not cry. She stood quite still, her face was very white. The sun coming through the open door made an aureole of light round her. Anna saw the man get up from the floor. He was tall and broad—to her it seemed that he filled all the space between Kate and herself. His eyes were fixed on Kate as he bent forward and once more held her close to him.

Anna saw they had forgotten her; she crept through the door out into the sunlight.

DURING the months that had passed after his decision to send her to school, there was at least one moment when her father did not doubt that he was doing the best thing for Anna in sending her away. He had been shooting on the hills, and as he rode homewards through a lane, he saw a small girl fighting with a boy. Quickly he rode up to them and found it was Anna, so intent on hitting with her fist and evading blows that she did not hear him when he called to her. He jumped off his horse, upset and angry, and shook her by the arm.

"Anna, what does this mean?"

A very frightened, very small boy in black —a Jew—standing close to the fighters, said in a trembling voice:

"She did it for me."

Without another word Anna's father put her on his horse, jumped up after her, and

rode quickly home. At the gate he got off. Paul was there waiting for the horse. Seeing Anna's dishevelled state he solemnly winked at her behind her father's back. Her father carried her into his room and put her on a high chair.

"Now I want to know the truth. What do you mean by fighting like a street child? It was disgraceful."

"He hit the small boy first."

"Well, what had that to do with you?"

Anna began to rub her eyes with a very dirty hand.

"Now, Anna, don't begin to cry. I want to hear what you have to say for yourself."

"I haven't anything to say for myself—only—but——." A loud burst of tears stopped the rest of the story. Her father waited for a moment. He opened his gun, looked through the empty barrels at the window, then put the gun on a rack on the wall. Anna was calmer. He asked:

"Well, what—only what?"

With an effort Anna started again :

"The little Jewish boy said that the inkpot in their synagogue was all gold, so the other boy knocked him down and kicked him."

"Didn't he hit back ?"

"Oh, no. He didn't think of it."

Anna saw that her father was looking at her : she went on speaking faster, sniffing now and then to keep back the tears.

"The Christian boy said he was lying and that the inkpot wasn't gold, and if it was it ought not to be ; he said that the only gold inkpot was in his church—he is a Calvinist. I heard it all."

"Yes, I understand all that, but when did you begin to fight, too ?"

Anna felt that her father was interested.

"I was passing when they said all that, and the Jewish boy was so small that I was sorry for him. He couldn't help having a gold inkpot in his synagogue. I said to the bigger boy, 'Stop ! You must not hit him,' and then I hit the big boy. He went

on shrieking, 'Ya. Ya. A nice thing to see a Christian girl fighting for a Jew,' so I hit him more and said I wasn't fighting for a Jew, but because he said that his church was the only one that had a gold inkpot. I said that Father Gabriel always used a large gold one."

Her father turned away for a moment. When he looked again at Anna his eyes were dancing but he spoke quite seriously :

"Has Father Gabriel a gold inkpot ?"

"Perhaps there is one in the church."

"Have you ever seen it ?"

"No."

"Then you deliberately said what was not true ?"

"Oh no, he may have one if the Jews have one."

Her father lifted her up on to his shoulders.

"Anna, why did you really fight ?"

She thought for a moment.

"Because he was little and frightened."

With a laugh her father ran with her out of the room.

"And now let's find Irma and ask her to make you tidy again."

But when Anna was safely in the care of her nurse, he walked up and down in the garden thinking of the fight he had seen. He knew it was not possible to keep her there any longer. Anna must go to school. The date of her departure must be settled. She must go directly after Kate's wedding.

The vintage that had threatened to be a bad one turned out to be even worse than they expected. That, and the great fire in the early summer, had brought much misery and want. In the spring the gipsy musicians went away to another place. Tállya was no longer what it had been, they declared, and people did not dance as they used to. There was a shadow over the land. Before they left, they played for the last time at Kate's wedding. After the marriage in church, Kate and Andrew, followed by the friends who had been asked to the wedding, drove round and round the streets

and lanes. Most of the afternoon was spent in this way. They stopped too at the inns, and talked and laughed with the people they knew. In the evening they gathered at Andrew Szép's new house, and sat down to a solid supper of meat, vegetables and heavy sweet dishes. Anna sat between Kate and Andrew. Kate wore a new white bodice tied with narrow red ribbon and on her dark red skirt was a wide band of scarlet silk. Andrew looked splendid with a bright green and red handkerchief hanging from the buttonhole of his black jacket. The gipsies sat on the oven on low stools. The dishes that were done with were handed to them. The meat they cut up with their clasp-knives, and ate with their fingers.

When the trestle table was cleared away the gipsies started to play. No one liked to be the first to begin the dance, they all laughed noisily and made many jokes. The girls tried to push Kate and Andrew into the middle of the room, but Kate refused to dance, and even when Andrew pressed

her to, she would not do so. At last, suddenly, she ran forward with him and the dancing began in earnest. But very soon she stopped. The others danced and sang and sang and danced till every one was tired out.

Kate and Andrew sat side by side, hand in hand, and close to them sat Anna with Elizabeth. Anna forgot to speak, she forgot everything but the music; it wailed and sobbed and sobbed and whispered and sighed like wind in the trees on a stormy night.

It was late when Elizabeth got up and said she had to take Anna home. Anna at first refused to go. She begged to stop, then cried, but Elizabeth was unusually firm.

"I promised your mother that you should leave before the rest of the people, and we must go."

Kate too said it was better that she should go then, the dancing was getting rougher, and the room was filled with smoke. Anna, very angry, stamped her feet, but let them put on her coat. She and Elizabeth with

Kate and her husband went towards the door.

As Andrew opened the door, a stream of fresh cold air blew into their faces. Kate and Andrew, glad of the fresh air, stood close together by the door as Elizabeth and Anna walked down the little path leading to the gate. Anna turned round before letting the gate close after them, and saw the two dark figures against the lamplight and wildly dancing people. As the gate shut, Anna knew that it shut Kate away from her for ever, nothing would ever be the same again. But it would be less hard to go away now she thought, having already lost one of the friends of her life.

Slowly she walked by Elizabeth, finding their way by the light of the moon. Whilst they were within the sound of the gipsies' music, Anna felt restless and unhappy, but away in the silence she was one with the peace of the night.

She walked in and out of the shadows of houses and high walls, past the well with

its sentinels of giant poplars. Now and then a dog barked, otherwise there was silence and the sense of sleep imprisoned amongst the mysterious half-hidden houses.

At home Anna's mother was waiting for them. She made Elizabeth stop the night in the house and sent Anna to bed in charge of Irma. As Anna left the room she called out to her:

"Sleep well, my angel, for to-morrow we go to Szántó to buy your clothes for school."

There had been endless discussions between Anna's mother, Elsa, Irma and the wife of the Lutheran pastor as to what kind of clothes children wore in England. The wife of the Lutheran pastor had been called in because before her marriage she had been governess in Budapest and had known there a family of English children. She was, in spite of this, not of any use in the discussion, as she could neither draw nor could she explain clearly what they had worn. She suggested that, as far as she remembered, they had been

dressed much in the same way as Hungarian children. Elsa had no children and cared very little about them. She thought she knew a great deal about foreigners. She went every winter to Egypt or the Riviera and imagined she was an authority on the ways of English children. She did not trouble even to listen to the minister's little wife.

"They dress in quite a different way. English people wear a great deal of red flannel underneath. Anna must have at least a red flannel dressing-gown."

She said, too, that she had written for some English children's books—those with pictures in them—to be sent her from Vienna, and that she would bring them over as soon as they arrived.

In the next week Elsa came into the house early one afternoon carrying a parcel. Anna's mother sat down by a table in front of four of Kate Greenaway's picture books. Irma stood close by looking over their heads as they turned the pages.

"They are very pretty," said Anna's mother, "but surely Anna would look strange in clothes like these."

Irma frankly disliked the pictures, and said so. Elsa was practical:

"Well, as no one can think of anything better, you'd better copy these. You can drive over to Aaron's shop at Szántó and see what you can get in the way of a hat as nearly as possible like this one." She put her finger on the picture of a child in a poke bonnet of many colours. "It is quite pretty, and in any case it is what most of the children in these pictures have on their heads."

In this way the shopping journey had been decided on, and the day after Kate's wedding, Anna, sitting by John and her mother—Irma was on the box seat by Paul—started off in the carriage for Szántó.

About a mile from Tállya they passed farm buildings. A herd of oxen was being driven towards the open gate of the yard. Anna's mother said to her:

"They say that when the Turks were here there was a great fight just by that house. Many Turks were killed, and their bodies were left in the cellars under the farm buildings."

Anna was not happy till the farm was out of sight.

A little further on, as the carriage went past an encampment of gipsies, three naked children ran out to beg. At the door of a hut stood Narra, the old gipsy woman who often came to Tállya to tell fortunes and to ask for money. She was feared and hated, as no one was quite certain that she was not a witch.

The road began to go slightly upwards. On one side was a plain, cultivated near streams and wells, on the other, the dead volcano; on the top stone of its peak was a large iron cross, put there to keep the mountain still. The road sloped gently down to Szántó. At the beginning of the village the street was wide, wide as a market-place, but where the shops were

and the post-office it became narrower. There on either side of the road ran a stream close to the houses. Each house had a small bridge leading to the front door.

Ill-grown birch-trees, almost leafless, on both sides of the road, gave it the appearance of an avenue, but it was all inexpressibly untidy and unkempt—a low-lying village on a long flat road.

Paul stopped the horses by Aaron's shop. Anna, instead of crossing the little bridge with the others, walked over a plank thrown across the stream a few yards higher up. Irma screamed after her :

"Of course you can't do anything like a properly brought up child. Just fall in, that's all, and all our day will be spoilt."

Once in the shop—a large square room with a wide counter all round it except in front of the door—Anna was lost in wonder. Aaron's shop had everything that a human being could wish for. Dolls, knives, marbles, strongly scented soap, and under a glass case there were even pearls and diamonds. Anna

stood in front of the case. How they sparkled, how they shone, like drops of rain on cobwebs—like hailstones on the snow. Her dreams were broken by Irma.

"Those things aren't real : all paste, rubbish, fit for these uneducated peasants. Now in Kassa you see real diamonds and pearls that cost a fortune."

Anna for a second time was impressed by Irma, but she turned away as if she had not heard.

Muslin and ribbon had been bought—the moment had come to choose the hat. In a store-room at the back of the shop, lying in a corner, were a number of hat shapes. Aaron led the way ; they all went after him to look at them.

Anna's mother and Irma turned over every hat and at last decided to cut up two and sew them together. By this means they made a hat not unlike a Kate Greenaway poke bonnet. Aaron's wife sewed it, Anna tried it on. She took it off her head at once and threw it on to the ground.

"I won't wear it. It's hideous, and I can't see anything when I have it on."

Irma persuaded :

"But it's just like the pictures of a little English girl."

"I won't be a little English girl. I am a Hungarian."

Aaron came forward rubbing his hands together as if he were washing them.

"Do you not want to have that pretty hat? Why, in big towns every one wears such things."

Anna cast a scornful glance at the ugly shape.

"They don't wear them in Tállya."

Her mother made a sign to Irma ; the hat was put into a paper bag, and Anna was distracted from her dislike of something strange and unlike the fashion of Tállya by a bar of chocolate.

The carriage was packed with parcels ; they started to go home. Halfway, near the steep side of the dead volcano, they stopped. Paul handed Irma a box of

sandwiches and a bottle of milk. As they were eating the sandwiches, round a bend of the road came a straggling band of gipsies—nomads who wandered from place to place selling wooden spoons that they had made, and mending chairs, for a living. First came a ladder-sided cart pulled by two thin horses, half the cart was covered over to make a travelling hut. Three horses—loose—and a number of men followed the cart. After them came many women carrying their babies and other possessions as well, in shawls tied on to their backs. They came close to the carriage, and two or three of them stopped to put out their hands. Anna's mother gave each of them money. They walked on wearily, thanking her without a smile.

Anna watched them as they passed. All of them, beasts and human creatures, looked sorrowful and lost in the background of the plain.

"Have they no homes, mother?" she asked.

"No. They like better to go from place to place."

"Do they say so?"

"I don't know, but that is what they do, so perhaps they like it best."

Anna pondered over this for some time, then she slipped her hand into her mother's hand.

"Perhaps very, very long ago, they lost a home they loved, and so they wander because they are not happy."

Her mother looked down at her quickly. She only said:

"My darling, my darling."

ON the day of Kate's marriage Paul disappeared ; no one knew where he had gone. His old mother was distracted with grief, and said she was certain that he had killed himself. Many people thought she was possibly right. A week after the wedding a letter came for his mother with the postmark of Fiume on it. The old woman went with it at once to Anna's father to ask him to read it to her. It was a letter from Paul. He said that he was sorry to give her pain, but he had had to go away or he would have done something desperate. He was on his way to America, the place where people became rich, and when he made enough money, he would send for her and for all his people.

The old woman wept :

" He was always in trouble with the girls ; he had too soft a heart, and now he

is lost to me through one of them. What shall I do? What shall I do?"

Elizabeth came to comfort her, and the two old women, shaking and trembling, walked away down the broad path of the garden.

When people knew that Paul had gone to America, some of them began to ask: "But where did he get money for his journey? He had not saved anything, and even if he went through an emigration society he must have had something of his own." Bit by bit, wondering from where the money had come, a whisper started that he had stolen it. Anna's mother when she heard it from Maria Száz, the postman's wife, was angry, and told Maria not to say such a thing again. Paul was a wild boy, but always perfectly honest. However, the story grew and was believed in, till one day Julia Kálmány sent for Father Gabriel and told him that she had given Paul the money. She had known him all his life and had always been kind to him, and when he

thought he was facing suicide, he came to her and asked her to help him to go away. She said to Father Gabriel :

"I had a little money by me, saved to give you for your poor, but Paul was straight and tall, and he was too young to be unhappy. I forgot about the poor, wishing to please him. I never could say no to any good-looking man."

Father Gabriel was distressed at losing the money for the poor, but he was more distressed at the way Julia Kálmány spoke. He thought she was frivolous and too much wrapt up in everything to do with this world. Now that she was old, he wanted her to turn her mind away from the past and the present too, and to think only of her future in another world. But when he spoke to her of death, she always stopped him :

"Yes, yes, it comes soon enough. Let me dream in peace of all that has been. Life was good once, though it was always difficult and full of pain."

* * * *

When Anna went to say good-bye to Aunt Julia, she found her with a letter in her hand. Paul had written to her from New York to tell her that he had been more lucky than most of his countrymen, and had got work at once. A man whose grandfather had come from Hungary had taken him as coachman. He had good wages, and enclosed money left over from his journey for his mother. Julia Kálmány looked down at Anna sitting on the little stool.

"He was a wild lad—very wild. He loved many girls and left them crying, and now a girl has hurt him at last. That's how it is, and that's how it should be."

Anna found comfort in knowing that Paul, a person she knew, was far away, out in the world. She would be able to think when she was gone that another was also a wanderer from Tállya.

Julia Kálmány saw that Anna was thoughtful. She remembered the reason of her visit.

"Well, well, so in a few days you will be

gone, and who knows if I shall ever see you again ? I shall watch you as you go down the path and out of the gate ; that will be the last time I see you as a little child. Perhaps I shall be still alive when you grow up, and you will write and tell me of dances and gaiety and lovers. Yes, that is what you must write to me about. That is what life is, but only for a little while—for a very short time. Then it is all over and done with. My days were like that once, filled with laughter—short days, happy days. And now they are long, long and spent in a chair near to a little square window, with only the roses and the clucking hens for distraction. Only a few weeks ago my rose bushes were unpacked from their winter straw, now they have fresh green leaves ; soon buds will grow and roses will scent the garden. When all the garden is roses, and I shall think surely these flowers will bloom for ever, they will fade, and the hens will cluck, cluck amongst their fallen petals as the wind blows them hither and thither. Women are like roses

—fragile and sweet-scented. Men are the leaves and thorns. It is sad to be old and think of these things."

Anna looked at her with curiosity.

"Aunt Julia, did you never have any little babies?"

"No, never."

Anna drew a long breath.

"Perhaps that is why you are sorry you are old. If you had a little girl you'd think of her and be happy."

"Perhaps I should. Who knows? But even if I had had a little girl, she would long ago have grown up and left me for a home of her own."

"Yes, but you would have little grandchildren babies to love."

"Yes, but I haven't."

"And you are unhappy; you have nothing but the window and the roses and the hens."

"Nothing but the roses and the hens."

Anna drew her stool close up to the old lady's chair, and looked up at her with dark and anxious eyes.

"Dear Aunt Julia, I don't want you to be sad."

"It is life, my lamb. We are all unhappy."

Anna's voice was slightly defiant:

"I am not going to be unhappy ever. Father, mother and John are coming to England quite soon."

The old lady looked at Anna dreamily; she had forgotten all she had said before.

"So you are really going away, and you won't come here again to eat quince jelly nor to play with the bust."

Anna felt she had borne all she could. Aunt Julia was always sad, but to-day her sadness was dreadful; she could share it and understand it.

There was a sound at the door. Anna's mother came in.

"What pain for her! What pain for her!" the old lady murmured, when she looked up and saw who was standing by Anna's stool.

Anna's mother knelt down by her little girl:

"Now, my sweet, kiss Aunt Julia and say 'Good-bye till we meet again.'"

The old lady's hands were shaking more than usual:

"It's really good-bye for me, Ida; good-bye for always."

Anna's mother suddenly sat down on a chair and cried. The old lady began to cry, too, very quietly as if she did not quite know why she was crying. Anna threw her arms round her mother's neck and sobbed. Susan came in, and seeing every one crying she also cried; but as she wiped away the tears with her apron she handed Anna a small paper parcel.

"Here is some quince jelly for you to take with you. You won't find anything like that in the wild countries you are going to."

The next day Anna drove with her father and mother to Balog. Her godfather and Elsa were in the room leading on to the terrace. Anna sat on her father's knees whilst they all talked. She began to get fidgety and bored, and was glad when at last

her godfather got up and called her to him at his writing-table. He opened a drawer, took out a small square white box and handed it to her. Anna opened it. In it was another box—a funny little round one. Her godfather, seeing she looked disappointed, explained :

" Press that. It will open."

Anna pressed hard with her thumb. The lid flew open. Inside was a ring with three large stones ; a diamond, a ruby, and an emerald.

Anna called to her mother across the room :

" Mother, mother, they are the Hungarian colours ! " She tried to put the ring on to her middle finger. It was too large, but fitted comfortably over two of her fingers.

Her godfather held the hand on which the ring shone.

" You must wear that ring when you are a big girl. I want you to remember that it was given to you by one whose pride it is to belong to this land. You are going away to a foreign country. You will learn other

languages and meet people of many races, but never be ashamed, as many of our race are ashamed, to speak your mother tongue. You are Hungarian. Speak Hungarian. Be Hungarian always."

Elsa came forward laughing.

"Papa, papa, you belong to a very old school. We are all cosmopolitan in these days."

A shade of anger passed over his face as he looked at her.

"If you mean by cosmopolitan, always praising some other country at the expense of your own, I agree with you."

Elsa laughed more.

"Come, all of you. I shall give you tea in my new smoking room. It has been done up like an old Dutch kitchen."

The old man smiled wistfully.

"She is a child for pleasure, never serious, never serious."

His clear dark eyes turned to Anna again.

"But, Anna, you must remember what I have said."

The morning before Anna left was spent in visits to Father Gabriel and the old doctor. Father Gabriel spoke kindly to her, even more kindly than usual, just as if she were altogether a Christian, and not something of a disappointment to him. He gave her a picture of Saint Christopher and one of Saint Elisabeth, and instead of a piece of chocolate he put a whole packet into her hands, telling her to keep it for the journey. When they got up to go away, he asked Anna and her mother to go with him into the church. They knelt down facing the altar with the picture of a saint on a white horse. Father Gabriel murmured a prayer. Anna's mother said "Amen." It sounded very loud in the empty church. At the door, going out, Anna's mother made her kneel down once more and Father Gabriel gave her a blessing.

All the way to the house of the old doctor Anna clung to her mother's arm.

The door of the old doctor's room was open; they saw him sitting on his high chair with his feet on the beaded stool.

His thoughtful eyes looked at them out of his drawn white face as if he hardly saw them. The young doctor was passing through the room. He leant over the old doctor's chair.

"Anna has come to say good-bye to you."

The old man looked at the little girl.

"Good-bye—no, no—not good-bye. We shall meet again. We are all on a long, long journey, travelling through a long, long night, but it ends in peace and love and joy. We shall all meet again when the journey is done."

He took up his pipe, opened the lid of the tobacco jar and began to talk of other things. Anna stood by the window till her mother got up to go away.

Every one they met in the street had a word to say about Anna's journey. She was torn between a sense of importance and despair at leaving her home. But she had not much time for brooding. In the afternoon, Maria and other of her school friends came to tea, and Anna was busy dividing

her toys between them. Maria, as a parting present gave Anna a picture on which a very pink hand, on a very blue background, held a card. On this was written in gold, "Distance does not separate hearts that are true."

Anna thought she had never seen anything more beautiful in her life and put it away very carefully with Father Gabriel's pictures.

As the train from Szerencs started early in the morning, fearing that she might be upset for the journey, Anna's father wished her to see no one on the day she left. Elizabeth and Kate came to see her at bed-time the night before. Kate cried a little, but she was so well and happy that nothing could make her really sad. She spoke of the future :

"You will come back a grand young lady in silk dresses with trains, and you will come to my little house and tell me everything about that great city—London—and about your life there. Andrew tells me that he heard once that whole families there live in houses built one on the top of another, and that

there are rooms that go up and down. You will tell me everything when you come back, and I will tell you all that has happened whilst you were away."

"Will you have another baby when I come back?"

Anna liked to see Kate when she threw back her head to laugh.

"My life, my precious one, I hope so indeed, lots, lots of them."

Kate and Anna hugged each other and parted with smiles.

"Don't forget me amongst your new friends. I shall be just the same when you come back."

And the door shut on Kate.

Anna felt happier. It was not so terrible after all. Kate said all the time "When you come back." Of course when one goes away one comes back, so why be sad about it?

Anna was in her night-gown sitting on the bed when Elizabeth came in. Elizabeth knelt down by the bed.

"Now Anna, say your prayers to me."

Anna said a prayer. When she had finished, Elizabeth sat on a chair close to the bed:

"You will say that every night, won't you, just like that?"

"But will God in England understand if I say a prayer in Hungarian?"

"God knows everything."

"I hope He knows when I shall come back."

"You must trust Him, my lamb, to know what is best for you always."

Anna felt sleepy.

Elizabeth smoothed her hair gently as she put her head on to the pillow.

"Elizabeth, I love you so much. I shall come back soon, shan't I?"

"Dear little child, dear little one."

Elizabeth crooned a sleeping song:

When Mary held her baby Son
All in her loving arm,
She sang a little prayer to God
To keep Him safe from harm.

And now when simple mothers hold
Their little children dear,
They sing as Mary did of old,
And feel the angels near.

Anna slept.

The morning was sunny, an early morning of spring. There were small fleecy white clouds in the sky like waves on a blue lake. Anna stood by the door that led into the courtyard. Two dogs were playing together, a white cat sat on a window-sill lazily watching them. The carriage waited. Mark, who had before been only a stable boy, held the reins. Since Paul left he had driven the horses. Anna's box was tied safely on to the back of the carriage; her father's portmanteau was in the front. He was going as far as Vienna with Anna, where she would meet her cousins and their governess. John was playing near to the lilac bushes; he saw Anna and toddled towards her, helped by Irma, who held him with a knitted rope. Her father and mother came

out of the house. It was time to start. Anna knelt down by John to kiss him. He held her tight with his small plump arms.

"Come back soon—soon."

Anna kissed him again and wondered why she did not cry. She felt far away from herself, like some one who had forgotten everything that had passed and was unable to think of the future. She let Irma kiss her, then jumped into the carriage and sat between her parents.

The horses were beginning to start when Maria rushed out of the kitchen. She ran by the side of the carriage and put into Anna's hand a very small blue linen bag.

"I forgot to give you this last night. It is Hungarian earth to be put into your coffin in case you die in a strange land."

Anna, flushed with gratitude, stood up on the seat of the carriage and shouted, "Thank you, thank you Maria," till they were out of the gate.

They passed people going to work, women carrying linen to the washhouse near

a well. At the end of the street, the carpenter's youngest boy was scraping up for fuel, dried cow-dung from the road. Everything was the same as every day. Anna could not believe that for her the day would end unlike any other day of her life.

Father Gabriel and Elizabeth stood by the church gate and waved as they drove past; they would have waved just in the same way if she had been going to Szerencs for the day. After the shrine on the Mád road they turned sharply to the right, and soon were in the street of the village of Ratka. It was like another world filled with strangers. All the people who lived there were Saxons, and did not mix with the people of the other villages near.

Before Ond they passed two droves of pigs, two enormous flocks of turkeys, and close to the village by the knotted willow trees sat the goose girl guarding her geese. The common in front of her was like a field of new-fallen snow. Anna kept thinking: "These things were there always—would

always be there. Where would she be?" By a long wooden trough near the line of mud that marked the track for carriages and carts, a shepherd stood playing his pipe. It was a voice from the woods. Anna remembered the song of the birds in the oak forest near to the Jews' burial ground. There the girls danced to the sound of gipsy music; there the periwinkles grew in the grass. Sitting by his mud hut a shepherd had often played his pipe. Through the music of the gipsies it had sounded like a plaintive cry of forgotten forest creatures.

At the station Anna stood close to her mother. Nothing interested her for a moment. She felt numb. An engine was shunting trucks, its wide black funnel belched out blue smoke and red sparks. Anna looked at it and watched the piston of the engine moving up and down, but without any curiosity.

"Mother, it is dreadful. I feel as if I had something on my head that pressed down to my toes."

Her mother was anxious at once :

"You don't feel ill, darling ?"

"No, not ill exactly, but I feel as if I shall burst. I want to scream and cannot."

"My sweet, think of all the wonderful things you are going to see, and that we are coming to you very soon."

A train steamed into the station. Anna thought of the fairy horse in the old story, that had galloped with the little goose girl on his back right to the end of the world. The train was a fairy horse. It would gallop with her into a land where everything would be wonderful and new. But what a high horse it was ! Mark had to help her father to lift her up to the carriage. Her mother came up after her.

A few minutes later the train was signalled to start. She took Anna in her arms and held her very tight. Afterwards she stood below by the carriage door, and without speaking looked up at Anna, who, utterly dazed, smiled down at her.

The train moved. Her mother took out a handkerchief and tried to wave it. Anna leant further out of the window—her father held her by the skirt. Before the train had quite left the station Anna saw a movement amongst the people close to her mother. Kate had rushed forward to take her foster-sister in her arms. Anna called out: "Kate, Kate. Mother, mother." They were hidden from her. She knelt on the seat of the carriage and watched the country. The line curved. In front of her far away were the hills. On the first hill were two small white dots—the churches of Tállya. Anna, holding the small bag of earth tightly in her hand, watched them till the curve of the cutting on the line hid them from sight.

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THE BALLANTYNE PRESS
LONDON & EDINBURGH

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